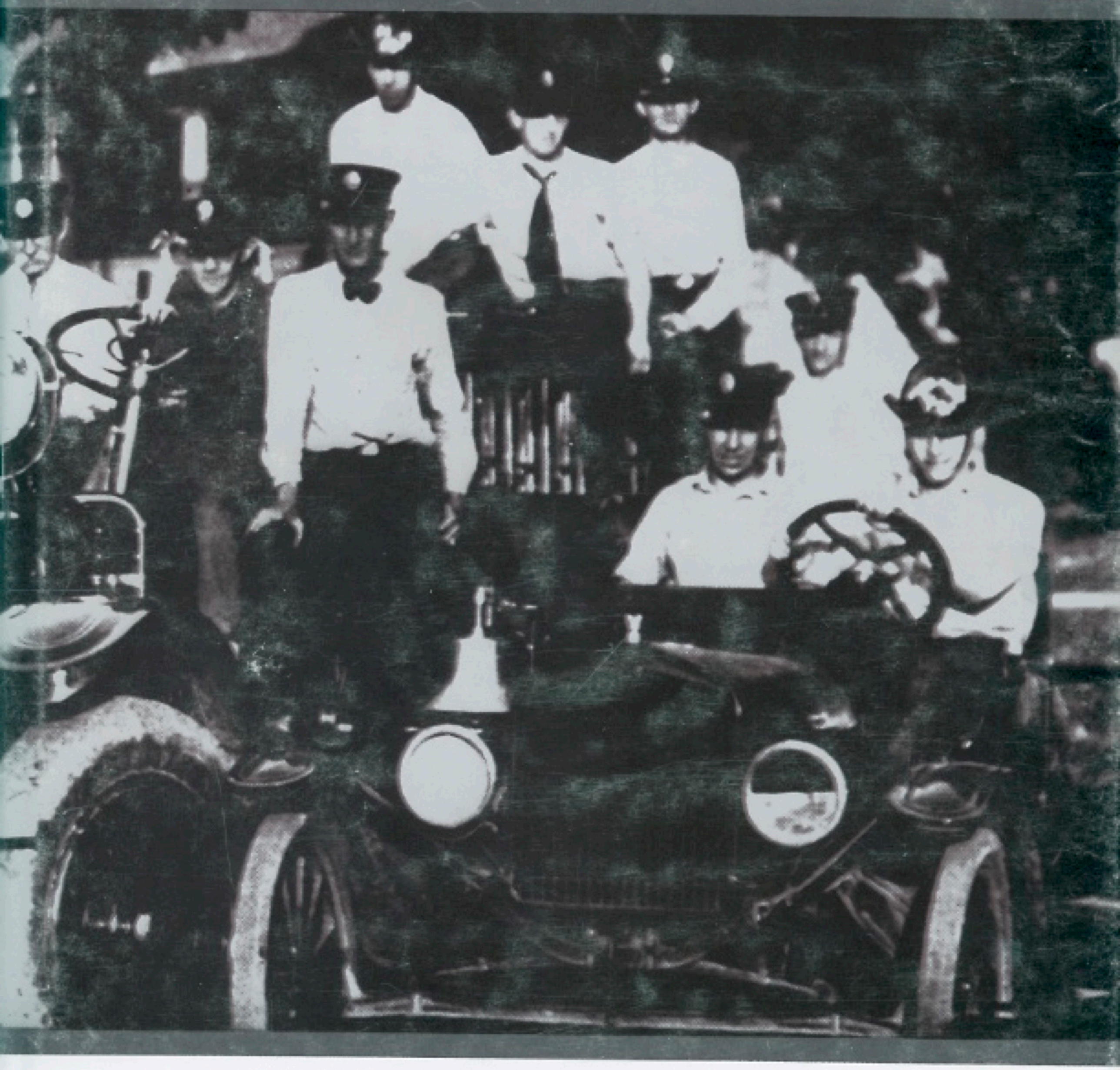
Triumph and Tradition

Firefighting in Prince George's County, Maryland

1887 - 1990

TRIUMPH & TRADITION

FIREFIGHTING IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND 1887 • 19



Bosanko

This cover photograph, circa the mid nineteen-twenties, is of the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department (Prince George's County Fire Department Company Number Three). Equipment pictured left to right are a 1917 Model "T" Hose Wagon, a 1926 American LaFrance Pumper and a 1915 Model "T" Chief's Car. Personnel pictured with the equipment are left to right, Joe McMan, Billy Donohoe, Charlie Alexander, Unknown, Arthur Bates, Clarence Moore, John Kline, Ed Chase, Unknown, Joe Plummer, Bernie Beal, Harvey Wilson, Chief Young, Reggie Austin and George Lee.

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Firefighting in Prince George's County, Maryland 1887 - 1990

by Ed Bosanko

About the Author

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Ed Bosanko joined the Army in 1976 and served as a military photographer throughout his tour and is currently a military reservist. Since 1988, Bosanko has been assigned to the Photographic Services Section of the Prince George's County Fire Department Public Information Office. Ed currently lives with his wife, Ann, in the Metropolitan Washington suburb of Crofton, Maryland.

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"On behalf of every Prince Georgian, let me say how proud we are to be protected by one of the nation's premiere Fire and Rescue services. Due to your dedication, courage and leadership, the people of this County are at a substantially reduced risk from the ravages of fire and are expertly protected in times of medical emergency. We are glad to join you in this celebration of your history."

Parris N. Glendening
County Executive
Prince George's County, Maryland

"It is a privilege to serve as the fourth County Fire Chief. As we prepare our fire and rescue service for the twenty-first century, our members and the citizens we serve can expect a continuation of the excellence upon which the foundation of our first century was built. The debt we owe to our history is enormous, and we are all extremely proud to present our past in this vivid and exciting historical narrative."

Steven T. Edwards
Fire Chief
Prince George's County, Maryland

A message from the author

Firefighting in Prince George's County is the first comprehensive history of this fire and rescue service. We feel this is a unique 103 year history which deserves to be written. It chronicles the development of the first incorporated volunteer fire company, through the years of the Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Association, and concludes with the development of a County Fire Department.

From the early days of the hand-drawn pumpers, to today's large motorized apparatus, this book profiles the people and events which have brought the Prince's George's County fire service, both career and volunteer, to its present status as a much admired fire service. Comprised of 47 fire stations, the Department has over 800 career employees, and 1,000 volunteers who operate 45 Engine Companies, 21 Ladder Trucks, 9 Heavy Duty Rescue Squads, 41 Basic Ambulances, 10 Paramedic Units and various other specialized equipment. Over the years, the County's fire service has attained a national and international reputation for its combination career and volunteer system.

Chapter One, "The Early Years," recounts the story of early unorganized fire protection with hand pumpers and bucket brigades, to the establishment of organized fire protection by volunteer fire companies in the late 1800's. It continues with the growth into the Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Association in 1922.

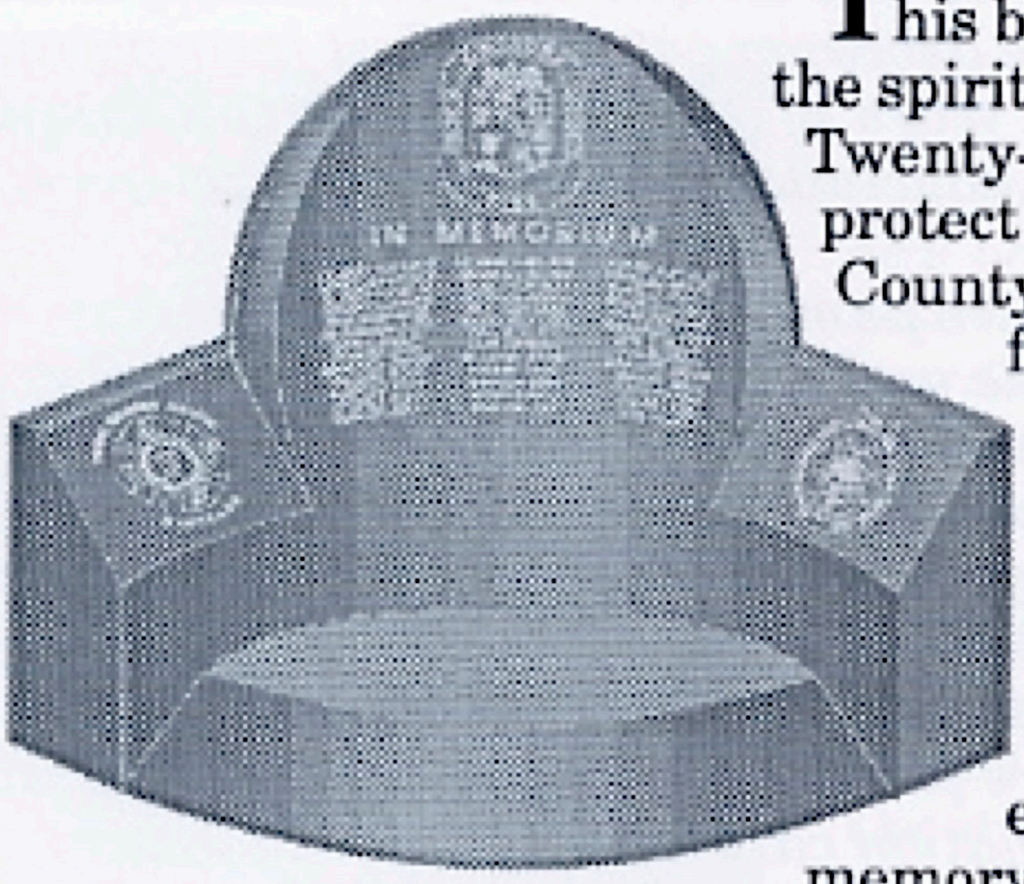
In Chapter Two, "The Association Years," the continued growth of the volunteer companies is described from 1923 to 1971. Apparatus from yesterday's small hand-drawn equipment to today's large and powerful motorized equipment is documented. It chronicles the success and problems incurred during the growth of the Association from five volunteer companies to today's thirty-seven.

Chapter Three, "Combination Fire Department Years," describes the establishment of the career County Fire Department. It traces the history from the small beginnings to today's nationally recognized combined career and volunteer system.

Like any project of this magnitude, it takes the combined efforts of many people to produce the finished project. It's impossible to list all those who have helped with this project during the last three years. However, thanks are due Mr. Charlie Burton, Mr. Ralph Collins and Mr. Francis X. Geary for helping guide this project to its completion. A special thanks is especially due to my wife Ann who, for the past three years often wondered when I would return home to clean up the stacks of research material which were scattered throughout the house.

Ed Bosanko
July, 1990

THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US



This book is written in rememberence of the spirit and dedication that prompted the Twenty-Eight firefighters listed below to protect the citizens of Prince George's County, Maryland from the dangers of fire. Each has made the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of duty.

We honor not only their passing, but the committment to mankind and community that each lived their life by. May the memory of their actions motivate every member of our Department to strive for excellence in the performance of duty each day.

B. Wesley Cranford • Robert Lohman • Jesse Lovejoy
John A. Hamer • William R. Stainback • John T. Streets
John H. Leyh • William H. Wells • James A. Melton
Gerald Britton • Dennis M. Boswell • Philip E. Tierney
Robert J. Harmon, Jr. • Charles R. Hobstetter
Richard L. Whittington • James A. Herbert • Charles R. Hofman
George Duvall, III • Dennis M. Mandragos • Mark W. Van Tassel
Richard W. Myers • Raymond A. Smallwood • James M. O'Connor
Donald A. Bowen • Thomas L. Graves, Jr. • Michael P. McCarthy
James G. Yvorra • Alan P. Sondej

"A man does what he must ----
in spite of personal consequences,
in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures --
and that is the basis of all human morality."

John F. Kennedy
Exerpted from Profiles in Courage (1956)

Dedicated to

M. H. (JIM) ESTEPP

Fire Chief 1978 - 1990

This book is dedicated to
Director of Public Safety, M. H. (Jim) Estepp,
for over 30 years of exceptional service and leadership

"As Chief of Department, Jim Estepp recognized the potential of a unified Prince George's County Fire Service to assume a position of international prominence; His tenacious standards of excellence and extraordinary leadership brought that vision to fruition. Our stature as a model combination fire system in the United States, and the top rated agency in County Government, is testimony to the proactive and innovative management approach he demanded, and the dedicated men and women of our system delivered under his leadership."

The Men and Women of the
Prince George's County, Maryland
Fire Department

Chapter One

THE EARLY YEARS

Prince George's County was established on May 8, 1695, when the Maryland General Assembly passed an act which read;

> *"An Act for the Division and Regulating Several Counties within this Providence and Constituting a County by the name of Prince George's County within the same Providence."*[1]

It assigned all of Maryland west of the Patuxent River and north of Mattawoman and Swanson Creeks (northern border of Charles County) to Prince George's County. This placed the current Counties of Montgomery, Frederick, Washington, Allegheny , Garrett, part of Carroll, and all of the District of Columbia within its borders.

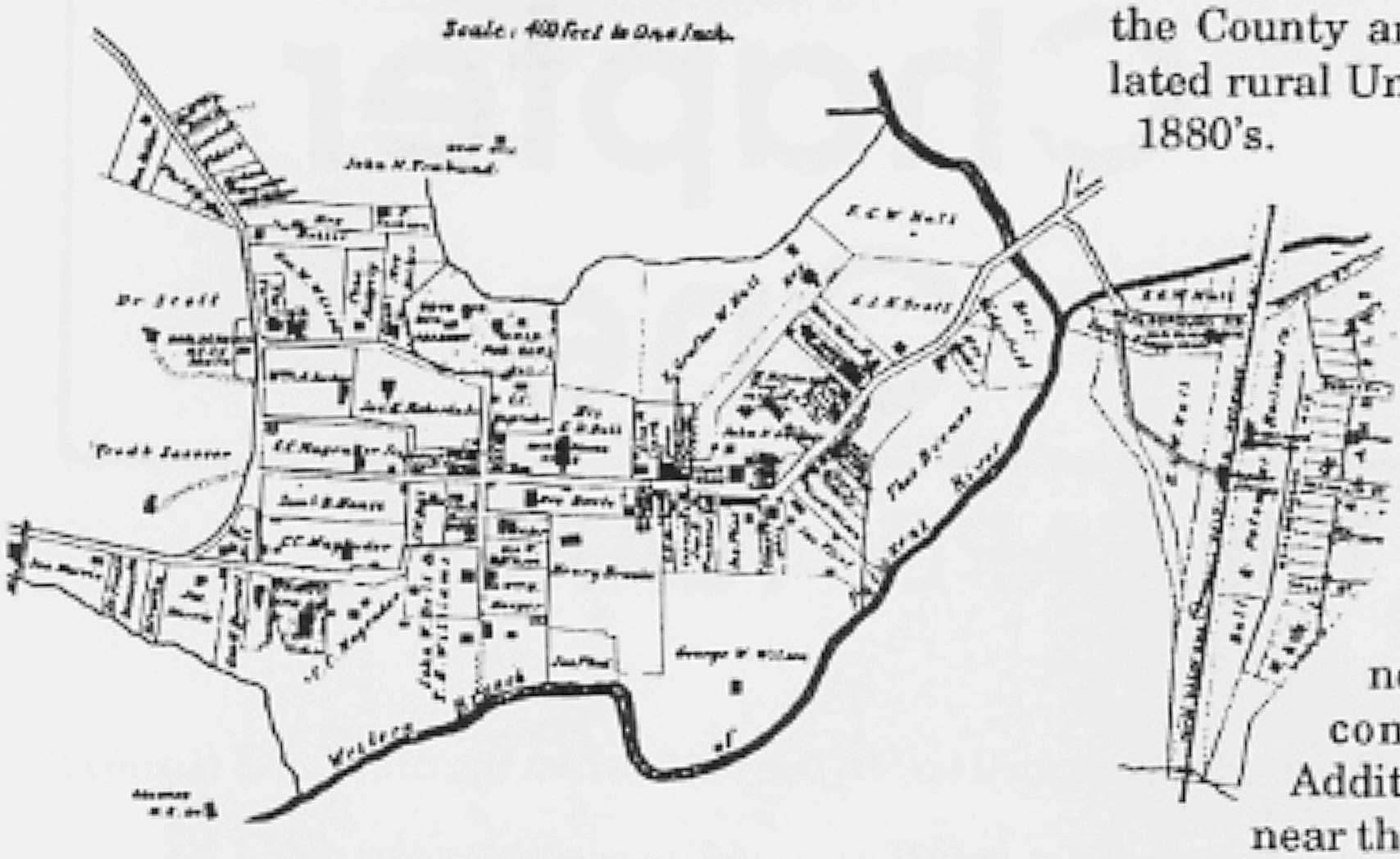
By the late 1800's, the borders had stabilized into the geo-political area familiar today as Prince George's County.

The new County was named for Prince George of Denmark and the first appointed officials were sworn in on April 23, 1696. During these early years, the population was sparse with only 658 taxables; free white males 16 years and over, male servants 16 years and over, and slaves of both sexes 16 years and over, except clergy and paupers living in the area. By 1707, the taxable population had increased to over 1,500. The population grew steadily, particularly in the villages of Upper Marlborough, Laurel, Hyattsville and Bladensburgh.

Early Fire Protection in Prince George's County

There was no organized fire protection during these early years. If a fire occurred and was discovered in time, the only protection available was for the residents to start a bucket brigade from the nearest well or pond. Often, the only thing to do was save the building's contents, and then watch it burn down.

UPPER MARLBOROUGH.



This type of fire protection was typical in the County and throughout the populated rural United States until the late 1880's.

Though no formal fire protection was present, one local official had fire protection in mind. In 1742, the town of Bladensburgh passed the County's first fire protection ordinance. It required masonry chimneys in all residential and commercial structures. Additionally, building owners near the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks installed metal roofs for added protection from the sparks thrown by passing locomotives. Interestingly, in the mid 18th Century, Bladensburgh was one of the largest ports in the colonies, with the exception of Yorktown, Virginia. [2]

Fire reports exist from the middle of the 18th century. A survivor's 1850 recounting tells of an inmate who started a fire which destroyed the prison in Upper Marlborough.[3] Other early fires destroyed the Weston Plantation near Upper Marlborough in 1816 and the Sacred Heart Church near Bowie in 1853.

The earliest record of an organized fire alarm system in the County was found in Upper Marlborough when, in 1879, an impromptu fire alarm system was put into place. It consisted of an old man named Uncle Ned Deville, who, whenever a fire started, would run around the town crying "Fire, Fire!" Residents would respond with buckets and pails of water to battle the blaze. Later, the Court House bells were rung when a fire occurred to alert the citizens. [4]

Slowly, in the late 1880's, organized fire protection began to develop in the towns of Upper Marlborough, Hyattsville, and Laurel. Almost exclusively, organizations were started by local citizens soon after major fires had occurred in their towns.

Upper Marlborough Fire Association

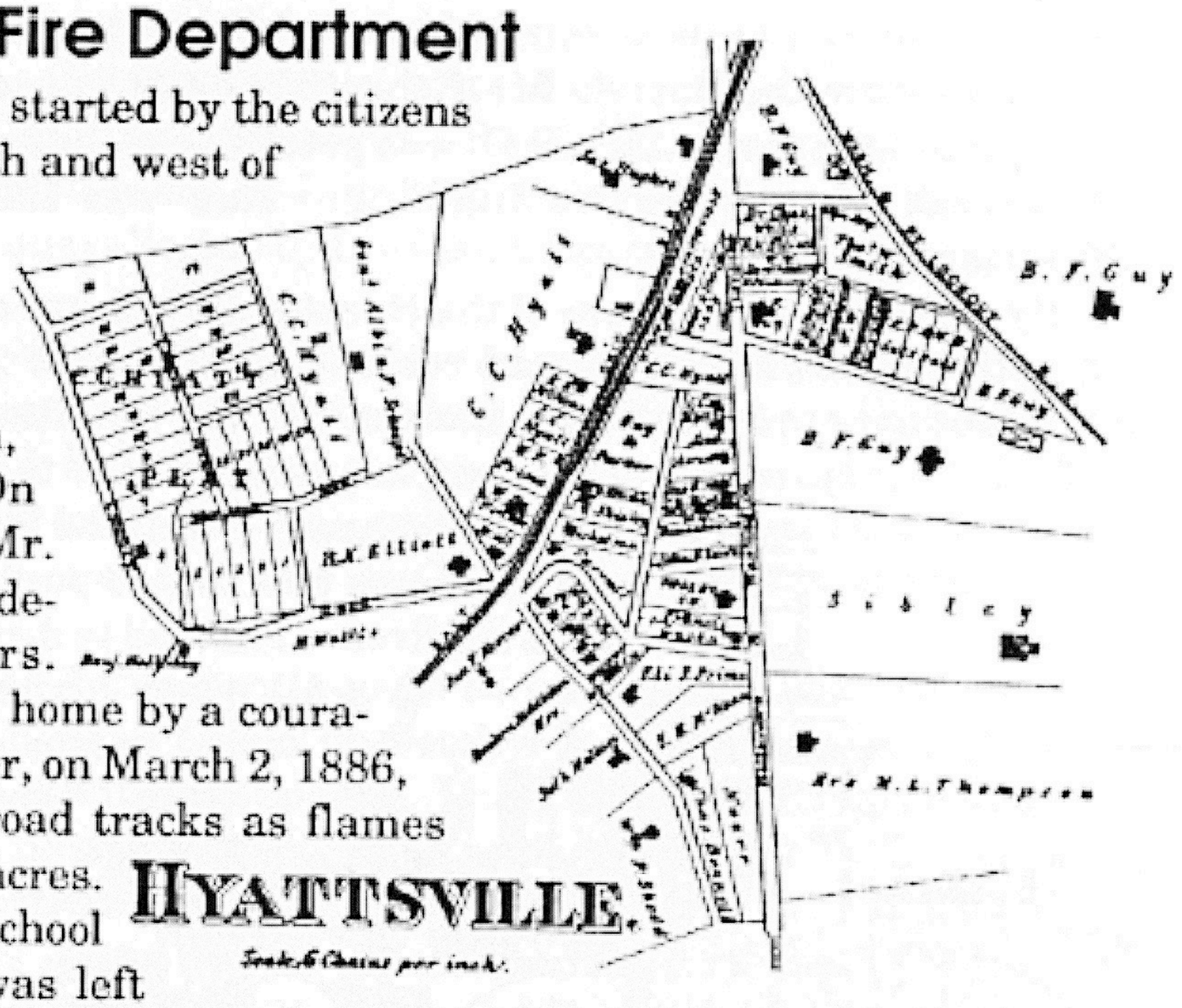
The first incorporated fire company was started in Upper Marlborough after a large portion of the town was destroyed by two separate fires during 1886. In response to these events, local citizens organized a volunteer fire company, The Marlborough Fire Association. The Association was incorporated by the Circuit Court of Prince George's County on March 8, 1887. Donations were raised from the members, residents and businessmen. Mr. John C. Wyvill was awarded a $342.25 contract for the construction of a two-story frame fire house. A town resident, Mrs. Belt, donated the land for the fire house.

The first equipment purchased was a hand-drawn Hook and Ladder Wagon, which could be pulled by horses—when available. The wagon carried 12 leather buckets, two

long-hooked spars, two red ladders, and a large brass gong with a pull cord for the firemen to sound while responding to an alarm. Unfortunately, the ladders were often not available when needed, the residents having borrowed them to paint their homes. [5] Records do not exist indicating the longevity of this fire company, but it remains a fascinating historical footnote.

Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department

The second organization was started by the citizens of Hyattsville, located to the north and west of Upper Marlborough, after major fires destroyed several homes in the area during 1886.



The Hickey home was destroyed first and, within a month, another large fire hit the town. On February 5, 1886, the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Bankhages was destroyed, but fortunately Mrs. Bankhages was rescued from the home by a courageous neighbor. Shortly thereafter, on March 2, 1886, residents watched from the railroad tracks as flames burned over several hundred acres. Livestock, farm buildings and the school burned. A path of destruction was left from Wells Avenue in the south to the Calvert Mansion in the north. Rumors had spread of the Mansion being destroyed, but in reality, valiant efforts by the caretakers had prevented this from happening. Daylight revealed the damage: the earth was scorched from Wells Avenue up to the Mansion. Bricks, stones, and pieces of burned timber lay where buildings had stood. Many property owners began thinking about fire protection, considering a shift in the wind could have sent the flames into the village, destroying their property. [6]

After this, it was not hard to raise donations towards the purchase of a fire engine for Hyattsville. Citizens donated $27 to purchase a hand pump which was mounted on a donated wooden barrel. The local blacksmith mounted a two-wheel truck under the barrel and a garden hose was attached to the discharge side of the pump. The village had its first fire engine, a hand-drawn Water Barrel.

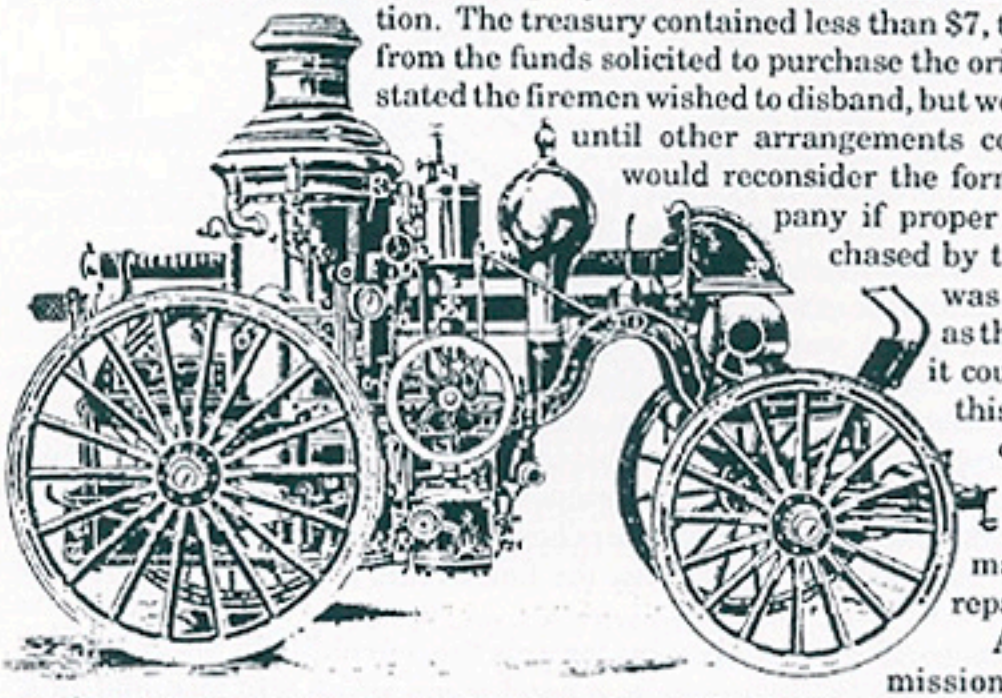
On October 8, 1888, the Water Barrel Engine responded to its first fire. The Presbyterian Church bell sounded the alarm around 10:30 a.m. for a fire at the residence of Mr. Addison K. Smith (occupied by Mrs. J. F. Marshall, Mrs. Roberts and the Misses Steward and Berry) on Railroad Avenue. Citizens responded to give aid and the engine was placed in service. Every available vessel was used to supply water to the engine from the spring next to the MacFarland house, along with water from the wells.

The origin of the fire was traced to the upper floors. Firemen advanced their small hose line into the house and were making progress extinguishing the blaze when the wells supplying the water ran dry, thus engulfing the large wood frame house. In a last ditch effort, the fence between the adjacent property was pulled down to prevent the fire from spreading to other residences.

Unable to extinguish the flames, a call was made to the nearby District of Columbia Fire Department, who dispatched an engine to the rail yard. A flatcar was moved to the loading dock to transport the engine to Hyattsville. A second call advised the District of the water problem, and the call was canceled as the engine would be useless without a water supply.[7]

Questions arose from citizens about arrangements for the storage of the Water Barrel. Town Commissioners appointed Mr. J. F. Ralston and Mr. J. B. Burnside to find a suitable location to store the Barrel. Mr. Sebastian Aman consented to the use of his barn and a metal plate with the initials F.D. was placed over the barn door in 1889 on the location of the current County Service Building. This was the first fire station for the town of Hyattsville.

By early 1895, members of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department were dissatisfied with the town leaders and residents. On April 29, 1895, a meeting of the Town Commissioners provided some insight into the condition of the young fire company. Dr. Clifford Cox, representing the company, turned over the books and treasury for examination. The treasury contained less than $7, the balance remaining from the funds solicited to purchase the original Barrel. Dr. Cox stated the firemen wished to disband, but would render assistance until other arrangements could be made. They would reconsider the formation of a new company if proper equipment was purchased by the town. The Barrel was in dire need of repair, as the water ran out before it could be pumped. Until this time, the firemen could get no financial support from the citizens or the town to make the necessary repairs.



As a remedy, the Commissioners requested fire equipment companies to contact the town and exhibit their equipment. The Handily Automatic Extinguisher Company wrote and suggested an exhibition be held. On the day of the test, an old shed on Tinker's lot was set on fire. Although the fire was quickly extinguished, the committee did not think the equipment was large enough for the town's needs.

On Independence Day, 1895, Mr. P. G. Howe of the Howe Pump and Engine Company appeared before the Board for a demonstration. He presented his equipment and the cost of a Howe Pumper ($600) which could be rented or bought by the city.

A discussion was held on the types of equipment needed for the town. Mr. H. O. Emmons thought a ladder truck was needed and Dr. Buck felt a hand pumper was equally necessary. After considerable debate, Mr. Emmons was placed on the Equipment Committee. Justice Carr, George N. Walker, Commissioner Smith, Archie Wells, T. C. Evarts, E. L. Latimer, Mr. Bailey and Mr. Dorr witnessed the test of the Howe Pumper. They were impressed with the capabilities of the unit and recommended its purchase.

The Committee also reported the fire company needed additional equipment. This consisted of: one 32-foot extension ladder, one 16-foot carpenter's ladder, three fire axes, two lanterns, six buckets, one 10-foot fire hook, and one 12-foot fire hook. The equipment was to be carried with the Water Barrel. Approval for the purchase was given with a $20 limit set on the expenditure.[8] In addition, Mr. George W. McDermott, a blacksmith, submitted a bid to refurbish the barrel for $27. He would install a heavy-plated iron barrel or tank, and put the plunger valves in first class working condition.

Unfortunately, for many of the town's residents, a fire usually meant the loss of their home because of inadequate firefighting equipment. Realizing this impact, Mr. F. H. Smith reported to the Town Commissioners, in July 1895, that fire losses for the previous 15 years were greater than premiums collected by fire insurance companies during the last 50 years!

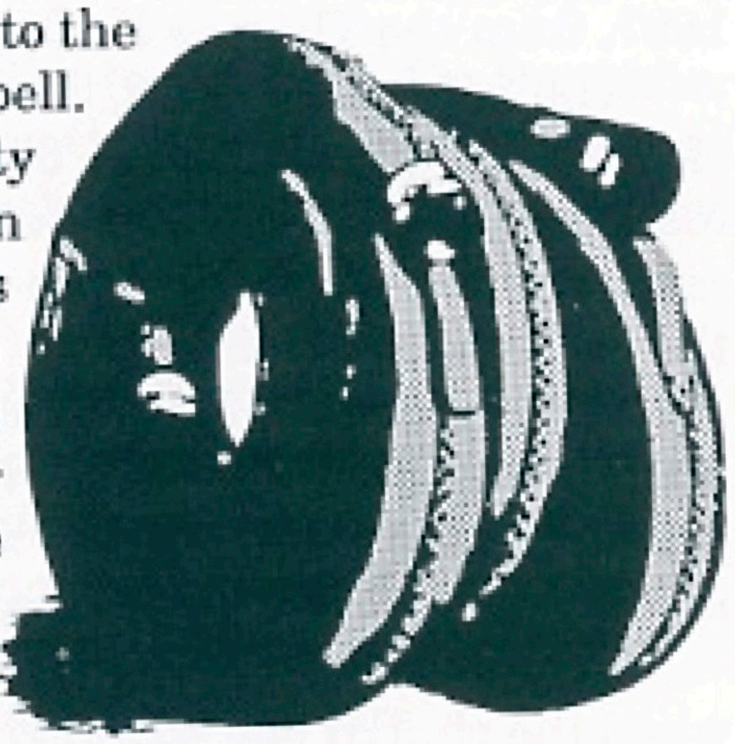
On September 3, 1895, the town decided to rent, with the option to purchase, a Howe Hand Pumper and Chemical Engine for $600. However, several members thought it was too much of an expense for the new fire company.

A reorganization of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department was also underway. Mr. Clarence Wilson was elected as Fire Chief. The Barrel was repaired for $20 and placed back in service.

The new Howe Pumper arrived, but before it could be tested and placed in service, it responded to a fire at St. Jerome's Rectory School on October 7, 1895. In a test of old meets new, both the Barrel and the Howe Pumper responded. The Howe was not placed in service due to a lack of manpower. The Barrel was placed in service, but due to an argument regarding its staffing, the shed burned to the ground. Residents were up in arms about the lack of fire protection from the fire company and called for a mass meeting.[9]

This meeting was held on October 11, 1895, where Clarence Wilson listened to the citizens' complaints and tried to answer questions regarding fire protection—or lack of it. He outlined the needs for the fledgling department, citing that 24 members were needed to operate the new pumper. Of those present, 16 signed up for the volunteer company; a successful volunteer recruitment campaign.

Shortly thereafter, the Board of Commissioners was informed that a Howe factory representative was in town and wished to test the new equipment. A test date was set for October 18, 1895, at Dr. Richardson's lot. The day of the test was a big day for the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Wilson, with his assistants, Mr. H. O. Emmons, Mr. Dorr and Mr. Markward, hitched up a horse to the Howe Pumper and drove it through the town sounding its bell. A dilapidated shed at the rear of the Richardson's property was saturated with coal oil. The engine, with five men on either side with buckets, was in position. The word was given and the torch thrown. Spectators, including members of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, gasped as the shed was engulfed in flames. Both the men and the pumper swung into action, and soon, to the amazement of the citizens, the fire was extinguished.



The Board approved the contract with Howe on October 19, and the Town Treasurer was authorized to pay $100 rental and $250 as a security deposit for the care and safe-keeping of the pumper.

An enthusiastic meeting was held by the Fire Department on October 24, 1895. Michael V. Tierney, President of the Fire Department, called the meeting to order. On the first order of business, the membership thanked him for his services. In an expression of their gratitude, they ordered the Fire Department be named the **Tierney Volunteer Fire Department of Hyattsville.**[10]

Committees were appointed at the meeting for water and fire alarm. The duties of the Water Committee included surveying all the wells and springs and recording their flows. The Alarm Committee was instructed to meet with the Presbyterian Church and St. Jerome's Church to make arrangements for the sounding of fire alarms by the church bells. New quarters were also needed for the expanding department. By November 12, 1895, the Howe Pumper and the Barrel were moved to Emmons Hall for storage.

The following month, they were moved to the Charles W. Barr Building (current location of Hyattsville Hardware) with a rent of $3 per month until better quarters could be found. Over the next several months, the Howe Pumper and the Barrel were moved frequently. In April 1896, Mr. Aman agreed to build a permanent structure at his Coal Yard (located on Railroad Avenue, now 4821 Rhode Island Avenue) to house the equipment, provided the Board agreed to a five-year lease at $60 per year. This structure had a small belfry, housing a fire bell which could be operated to sound alarms.

Mr. George Perkins spoke to the Commissioners regarding the use of his private water system. Permission was granted to extend his water system, provided fire hydrants were installed. This new water supply system caused the department to change the way it fought fires. A Hose Reel was requested by the department, and ordered in September 1897, from the Thomas K. Carey Company.

The following month, the Hose Reel arrived having cost $45. Two hundred fifty feet of hose cost an additional $99. However, the poor dirt roads in the town were often muddy and impassable for both the Hose Reel and Howe Pumper. A payment of $5 was authorized by the town to the owner of the first horse who arrived at the fire house to pull the equipment to a fire.[11]

Adding to the Hyattsville fire service problems, during the summer of 1898 was a serious drought. As wells dried up, Mr. Perkins was granted permission to extend his private water service to the area homes. Four fire hydrants were installed along the system for use by the Fire Department.

Two years later, a fire was witnessed by the citizens of Hyattsville on March 28, 1900, when the church bell sounded the alarm for a house fire in the first ward. The following account is from the March 29, 1900 edition of *The Washington Post*.

"The residence of Miss Haddie R. Thompson, was destroyed by fire 10:00 this morning. The fire was discovered by Mr. William Scott, a laborer on the place. The alarm was given and a large crowd of citizens endeavored to save the furniture, their efforts in a measure being successful. A defective flue is suppose to have caused the conflagration. The dwelling and furniture were partly insured. The local fire company responded, but owing to a want of organization, made a failure in its attempts to extinguish the flames."[12]

The fire department was again faced with problems and called for a special meeting to take place on April 3, 1900. One of the problems at the Thompson fire had been lack of water. Shortly thereafter, citizens approved the installation of the first municipal water system in the County. A committee also suggested the Town Board of Commissioners be approached for additional funds. An *Evening Star* article on April 13, 1900, gave the following account of the meeting.

"A meeting was held last evening at Magruder's Hall for the purpose of reorganizing the volunteer fire company. Dr. Charles E. Postley, President of the Board of Town Commissioners, was made Chairman, and P. M. Leakin was chosen Secretary. A motion was made by H. O. Emmons, to be submitted to the Commissioners for the purchase of a lot and the erection of a suitable building for the fire company; and to be used for other municipal purposes.

Four of the Town Commissioners were present and promised their support for the movement to bring the fire company to a state of efficiency. The following officers were elected: Clarence Wilson, President; George Burns, Secretary; Harry K. Miller, Treasurer; and P. M. Leakin, Fire Marshall. A special meeting will be held at the engine house Saturday next at 7:30 o'clock for the purpose of perfecting the organization."[13]

Even with this new support, the fire company again fell into disarray. On December 9, 1901, Mr. H. O. Emmons made a motion for the Water Committee of the Common Council to sell the fire engine (Howe Pumper) or use it in exchange for hose or other items needed by the town. The motion also read:

"Be it resolved by the Mayor and Council of Hyattsville, that the Baliff be and is hereby ordered to remove to the pump house on or before January 1, 1902, for storage to said house, the fire engine and hose carriages, if the same shall not have, prior to that date, been disposed of by sale or exchange; and further, that Mr. J. A. Aman be notified that the corporation will not require the use of the house where said engine is now stored after December 31, 1901."[14]

The Barrel was not mentioned, as it was located at the Dorr property and in need of repair. At the next meeting of the Council, January 13, 1902, the Baliff reported the engines had been moved to the pump house on Wells Avenue.

Little action was done over the next three months to reorganize the fire department. On March 10, 1902, Mr. Emmons requested the Water Committee purchase another Hose Reel and place it in the 2nd Ward. A Hose Reel with 500 feet of hose was purchased from the Eureka Hose Company. The Council authorized the payment of bills amounting to $280 and $291, respectively.

With new equipment on hand, interest in the department was again up. Arthur Carr spoke to the Mayor on May 3, 1902, and reported he "had been elected President of the Fire Department and that a Secretary and Treasurer had also been elected. A meeting to further organize would be held in the near future."[15] The Howe was offered to Baltimore County for $300, but Baltimore declined and it remained unsold.

On June 2, 1902, John Fainter made an inquiry into the location of the Hose Reels and suggested they be placed in convenient places and the public given notice of the locations. Slowly, the reformation of the department was taking shape.

By October 25, 1902, the Hyattsville Fire Department had been divided into two companies. It was arranged for the School Bell to be rung in the event of fire, and for the older boys to be excused so they could pull the Hose Reels. Mr. R. F. Talman was appointed Chief of the Fire Brigade by the Council. An offer was made to trade the Howe Pumper for a Ladder Truck.

The purchase was approved on May 29, 1903, in the amount of $150, plus the exchange of the Howe Pumper. A fund-raising drive was started to supply the fire department with the necessary firefighting equipment: helmets, raincoats, belts, and badges.

In an important step toward a coherent fire protection plan, an ordinance protecting fire department property was presented by John Fainter at the Council meeting on July 25, 1903. This was a first for the town. It read:

"Be it enacted and ordained by the Mayor and Common Council of Hyattsville, that no vehicle of any kind shall pass over and across any water hose belonging to the Mayor and Common Council of Hyattsville, when the same shall be in use in said Town. And anyone violating the foregoing ordinance upon conviction before a magistrate of said Town shall pay a fine of not less than $5 nor more than $25 for each and every offense in default of fine, the offender to be committed to the County jail for a period of thirty days unless the fine be sooner raised."[16]

Within six months, Mr. Fainter reported to the Mayor that the Department's coffers were again virtually depleted. He requested the Council pay $30 to build a shelter for the new Ladder Truck.

In February 1904, Baltimore was ravaged by fire. A call was sent out to the surrounding areas for help. A train loaded with fire equipment and men left Washington and stopped in Hyattsville. Five men: Robert Coward, Kinjero Matsaduria, George Wiseman, Herbert Fleshman and Alex Hasson boarded the train and spent the next three days helping fight the great Baltimore fire.[17]

John Fainter, Jr., was elected Chief of the Fire Brigade on April 8, 1904, replacing R. F. Talman who had resigned. Meanwhile, the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department was finally incorporated on February 5, 1905. The church bells in the town originally were used to signal the fire alarms. The location of the fire was reported by the number of rings the bells made.

Location of Fire	Number of Rings
1st Ward	5-1-1-1
2nd Ward	5-2-2-2
3rd Ward	5-3-3-3

Understandably, with this system, signals were often misinterpreted and equipment and men would race to the wrong ward. Foreman of the companies used whistles to signal commands to their firefighters. Number 1 used one long whistle to call attention; one short whistle to turn water half on; two short whistles to turn water full on and three short whistles to turn water off. Number 2 used two long whistles to call attention; one short whistle to turn water half on; two short whistles to turn water full on and three short whistles to turn water off. The Chief or his assistants would signal with one short whistle, followed by two short whistles to stop all fire streams.

Chief Fred W. Soules, of the Fire Department of Hyattsville, reported a steady growth in equipment and manpower to the Mayor and Common Council during his annual report on May 25, 1914.

"I have to report the following property in the possession of the Fire Department of Hyattsville:

Reel No. 1: one Hose Carriage, 500 feet of old hose, one nozzle, one axe, one lamp, one crowbar, one plug wrench (two lost), three hose supporters, two smoke protectors (one lost), one nozzle tip, one bell, one shut-off nozzle tip, one plug cut-off and valve, 30 feet of rope.

Reel No. 2: one Hose Carriage, 250 feet of new hose, 250 feet of old hose (in bad condition), one nozzle, 30 feet of rope, one lamp, three hose supporters, one bell, two smoke protectors, one Perkins plug wrench, two town plug wrenches, two hose clamps, one shut-off nozzle, one plug cut-off and valve, one axe, one crowbar. Axle of No. 2 Reel is sprung and should be straightened.

Truck A: one 40-foot extension ladder, one 28-foot extension ladder, one 18-foot ladder, one 16-foot ladder, one 14-foot ladder, one 12-foot ladder, four lanterns, two picks, two axes, 199 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose, one 2 1/2 inch nozzle, two 8-foot ice hook poles, two 16-foot ice hook poles, 12 buckets, one scaling hook, one siamese twin connector, one bell, 30 foot of rope, one iron keeper for ladders, one horse-drawn four wheel truck. Truck and apparatus in good condition.

Chemical Company: one Chemical Cart, 100 feet 3/4 inch rubber chemical hose, one clamp, four Fire Warden fire extinguishers (new), three old extinguishers, one 3/4 inch nozzle, one plug wrench, one crank for hose reel, 30 feet of 1/2 inch rope. The chemical cart is not mounted on springs, and the extinguishers are not held solidly in place, which causes the chemicals to slosh out, and sometimes causes the bottles and stoppers therein to become broken. This cart should be fixed at the first opportunity." [18]

Hyattsville members were also busy planning for a new fire station. Land for the building had been purchased on May 12, 1907. It was located on Ravenswood Avenue at the Old Perkins Water Well site. The town passed a special tax of 5 cents for five or six years to pay for the fire stations expenses. The first item purchased was an automatic hydraulic relief valve and one shut-off nozzle on July 15, 1907. Cost of these expenditures was $65.

By 1911, a new fire station was under consideration and the town leaders wanted to take control of the fire department away from the volunteers. Over 50 active members were on the rolls of the company. They passed a resolution on March 11, 1911, giving support to the idea of a city fire department.

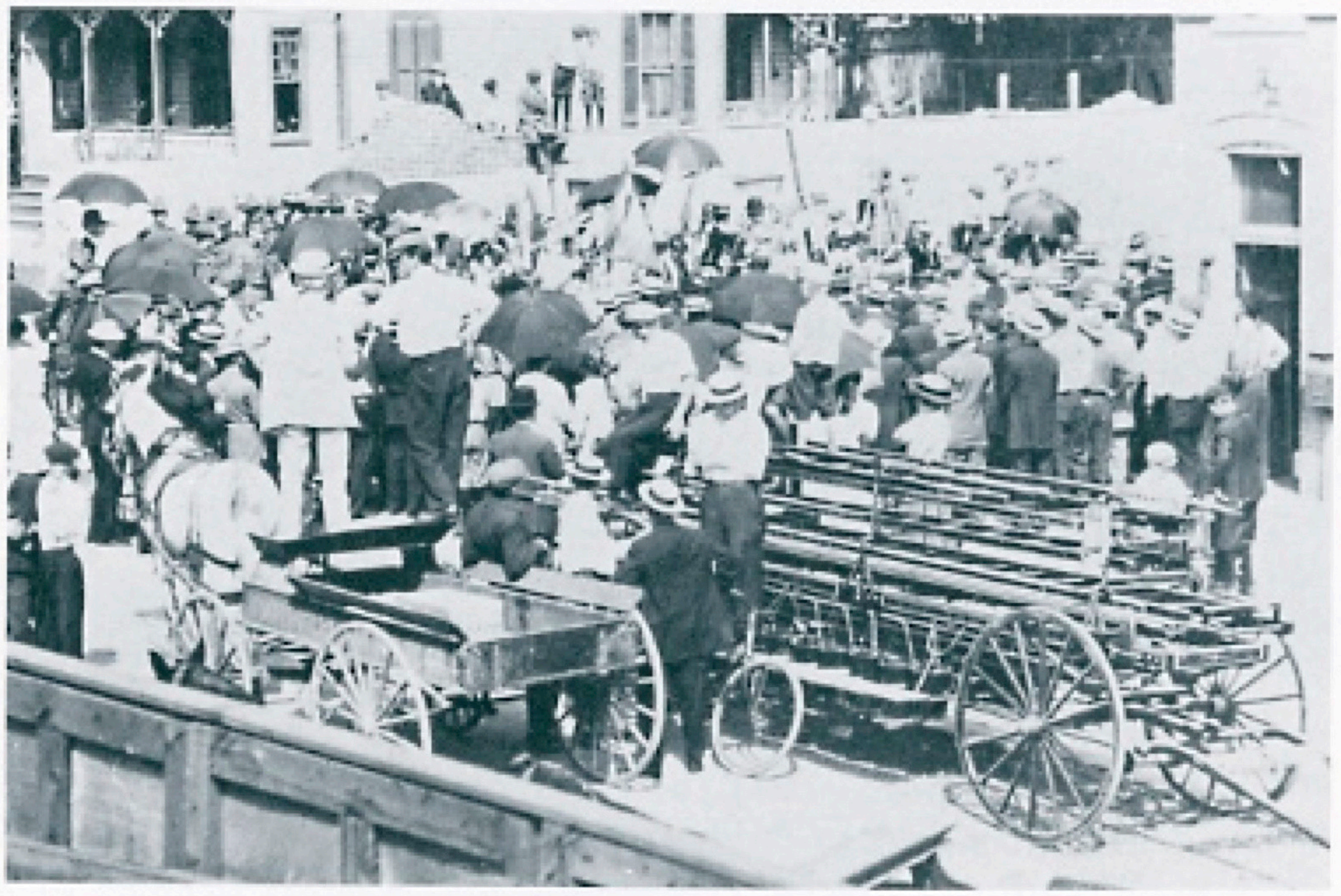
"We, the undersigned members of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department, believe in order to come under an ordinance of the Mayor and Common Council, that all property now belonging to the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department should be in the name of the Town of Hyattsville. We believe that the lot owned by the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department would be a valuable asset to the Town of Hyattsville, there being a well of water on said lot. The purchase price was $450 at the time the lot was bought. We consider that $300 would be a fair price for the same; other property owned.....makes $500 in all. The said sum of $500 to be paid to the Treasurer of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department to be used for the following purposes—to uniform 25 members with a parade uniform and a service uniform."[19]

On July 31, 1911, the City of Hyattsville passed an ordinance placing the Volunteer Fire Department under control of the City of Hyattsville. The current members of the fire department were removed and replaced by members picked by the city leaders. The companies were designated as Hose Company Number 1, Company Number 2 and Truck Company "A." The fire alarm system was further improved in the town after arrangements with the telephone company were made. The operators were instructed, in case of fire, to first call the Priest to sound the alarm, then the Chief, Assistant Chief and Captains of the Fire Department.

A Chemical Unit was started on January 16, 1912, by members of the Hyattsville Fire Department. A local blacksmith, Mr. Bursey, built a cart with a box which carried four chemical fire extinguishers. The cornerstone for the new fire station and municipal center was placed on September 2, 1912. Later the same month, Chief Devlin reported the Hyattsville Fire Department had the following equipment on hand: two Hose Reels, one Ladder Truck, and one Chemical Cart.

On the night of November 29, 1912, a large fire broke out at the Maryland Agriculture College (now known as the University of Maryland) while it was closed for the Thanksgiving Holidays. Fire Departments from Hyattsville and the District of Columbia responded. Enroute to the fire, the horse pulling the Hyattsville Hose Reel dropped dead and was replaced by a touring car. The District Fire Department sent an engine by railcar; however, they were unable to unload the fire engine at College Park as there was no ramp. Little water pressure was available to fight the fire. The fire destroyed two barracks and the Administration Building. Luckily, none of the students, faculty or firemen were injured or killed in the blaze. [20]

January 23, 1913, saw the formal dedication and opening of the new Hyattsville Municipal Building and Fire Station. The new fire house caused renewed interest in the fire company by the town.



Hyattsville purchased its first piece of motorized fire apparatus in 1918. A Ford Model "T" equipped with one 28-foot extension ladder, one 12-foot ladder, scaling ladder, 450 feet of hose, four buckets, two nozzles, two plug keys, one stretcher, one iron jack, one truck jack, assorted hand tools, one bell, four chemical extinguishers and holders, one spare tire, and three lamps.

The Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department continued to grow, and in 1922 they purchased a used American LaFrance Type 75, combination Chemical and Hose Junior Pumper.

Laurel Volunteer Fire Department

Meanwhile, the residents of Laurel (10 miles north of Hyattsville) were also faced with the horrors of fire and lack of adequate fire protection. Some conjecture by town historians has suggested a fire station had been established at the Laurel City Hall by 1868, and that it was active during 1888. Two large fires destroyed the Masonic Hall and Baptist Church during 1896. Most evidence points to the founding of an organized firefighting group in Laurel near the turn of the Century. [21]

On August 27, 1898, a large fire struck the Milstead Hotel and the building burned out of control. The local firemen were faced with more than they could handle, having only buckets and a few ladders available. They soon had the operator call the Baltimore City Fire Department for help. Little did they realize the tragedy this would cause. In the book, The Unheralded Heros of Baltimore's Big Blazes, the author, William Murray, gives an accounting of the fire call.

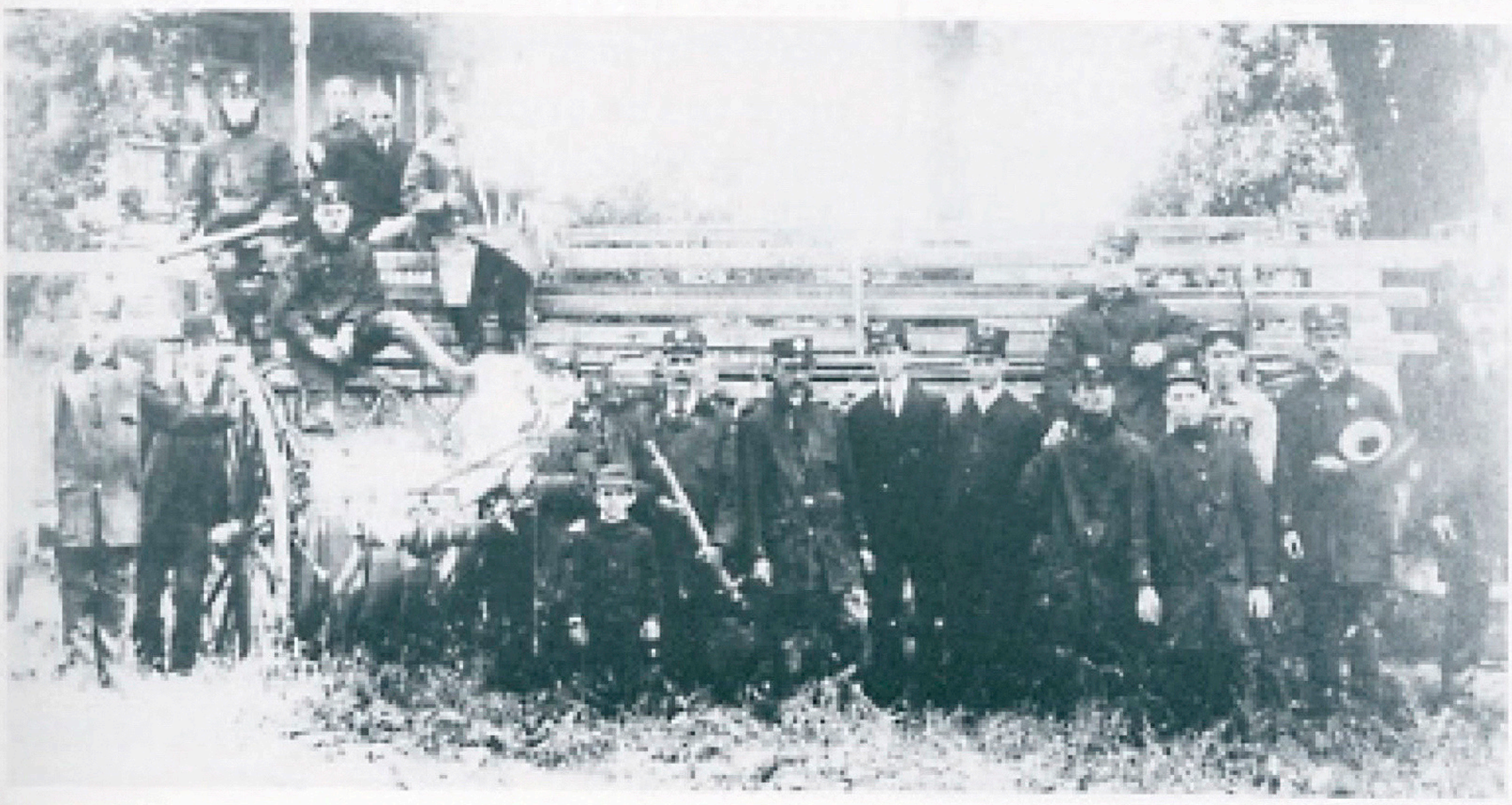
"On orders of the Chief Engineer, Company Number 10 responded to Camden Station, and boarded a special car of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, to assist the firemen in Laurel, Maryland. They arrived in one hour. It being impossible to disembark the horses from the railway cars, the men were compelled to draw the heavy Hose Wagon and Steam Engine to the desired location. Pipeman Franke was stationed at the pole of the Steam Engine when he stumbled and fell under the wheels, which passed over his head causing instant death. He was 29 years of age with only 44 days in the fire service." [22]

This was the first recorded death of a firefighter in Prince George's County. Even after this large fire, little was done by the locals to organize a formal fire department. Less than a year later, another major fire occurred on December 13, 1899. This time, 12 buildings and the Presbyterian Church on Main Street were destroyed. The movement to organize the fire department took shape shortly afterwards.

Several interested citizens attended the first meeting. A second meeting was held on July 9, 1902, headed by Mr. Albin Fairall, Mr. David M. Fisher, Mr. Harry McCullough and Mr. James Federline. The Town of Laurel worked closely with the group to draft rules and regulations which covered such items as the election of the Fire Chief, proper expenditures, right of way for responding apparatus, arrest powers, and fines for damage to fire department property. Not surprisingly, many of these issues endure in today's fire department's.

On October 13, 1902, the rules and regulations were passed and the Laurel Fire Department started to provide fire protection for the town. Mr. Fisher was elected the first Fire Chief of the new organization.

Company Number 1 was located on the east side of 8th and Main Streets and equipped with a hand-drawn Hose Reel and a horse-drawn Ladder and Bucket Wagon. Company Number 2 was located in the Old Town Hall on the corner of 5th and Montgomery Streets (present site of the Armory) and was equipped with a Hose Reel. Company Number 3 was located on Washington Boulevard and was also equipped with a Hose Reel. The fire alarm siren was located on the Rosenfield Shirt Factory and was operated by the janitor when a fire was reported.



When the siren sounded, it must have been quite a spectacle to see the men in their long rain coats, rubber hats and boots, running down the dusty or muddy streets. A horse was sent by the Laurel Cotton Duck Factory to Company Number 1, to pull the Ladder and Bucket Wagon whenever an alarm sounded.

Through the years, good times followed by bad times, caused discouragement, and the eventual disbanding of Companies Number 2 and 3. Thereafter, Company Number 1 was called to respond to fires throughout the town and surrounding areas. There were difficult times when the membership was down to a dozen men who had to finance the rent and heating costs associated with maintaining operations. Fierce pride, boundless energy and determination became the legacy of the company.

Mr. A. F. Fairall, of Laurel, was elected as President of the Maryland State Firemen's Association, eight years prior to the organization of the Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Association.

Town of Laurel Ordinances Adopted October 13, 1902

*"**Section 1:** The Fire Department of Laurel shall consist of three hose companies and one truck company to be designated as Hose Company Number 1, Hose Company Number 2, Hose Company Number 3 and Truck Company "A."*

***Section 4:** The Chief of the Fire Department shall sign for all property belonging to the town and used in extinguishing fires and shall be responsible to the Mayor and City Council for its safe keeping and protection at all times.*

***Section 6:** The fire companies while responding to an alarm, shall have the right of way over all streets, avenues, alleys and public thoroughfares while engaged in extinguishing fires or protecting property. Any person or persons hindering or delaying in any way the progress of the companies shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction before any Justice of the Peace in and for Prince George's County, shall pay a fine of not less than $5 nor more than $20.*

***Section 7:** It shall be unlawful for a person or persons to injure, deface, improperly use or destroy hose, hose carriage, truck or any implement or tool used in extinguishing fire or protecting property.*

***Section 10:** It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to break, destroy, injure, unfasten, remove, deface or in any manner tamper or meddle with any pole, wire, signal, gong, bell, whistle or any device used in connection with the fire alarm system of Laurel."*[23]

Maryland State Firemen's Association

Other fire departments were already organized, or in the process of organizing outside of the County during the late 1880's. These fire companies saw a need to form a State-wide organi-

zation to exchange information and ideas on firefighting. A group of interested volunteer firemen met in Frederick in 1892 to form the Maryland Volunteer Firemen's Association.

Recognizing the necessity of an organization throughout the State, the Independent Hose Company Number 1, Junior Fire Company Number 2, the United Fire Company Number 3 of Frederick, and the Guardian Hose Company of Mechanicstown (now Thurmont) met on January 20, 1893 at the Independent Fire Hall in Frederick.

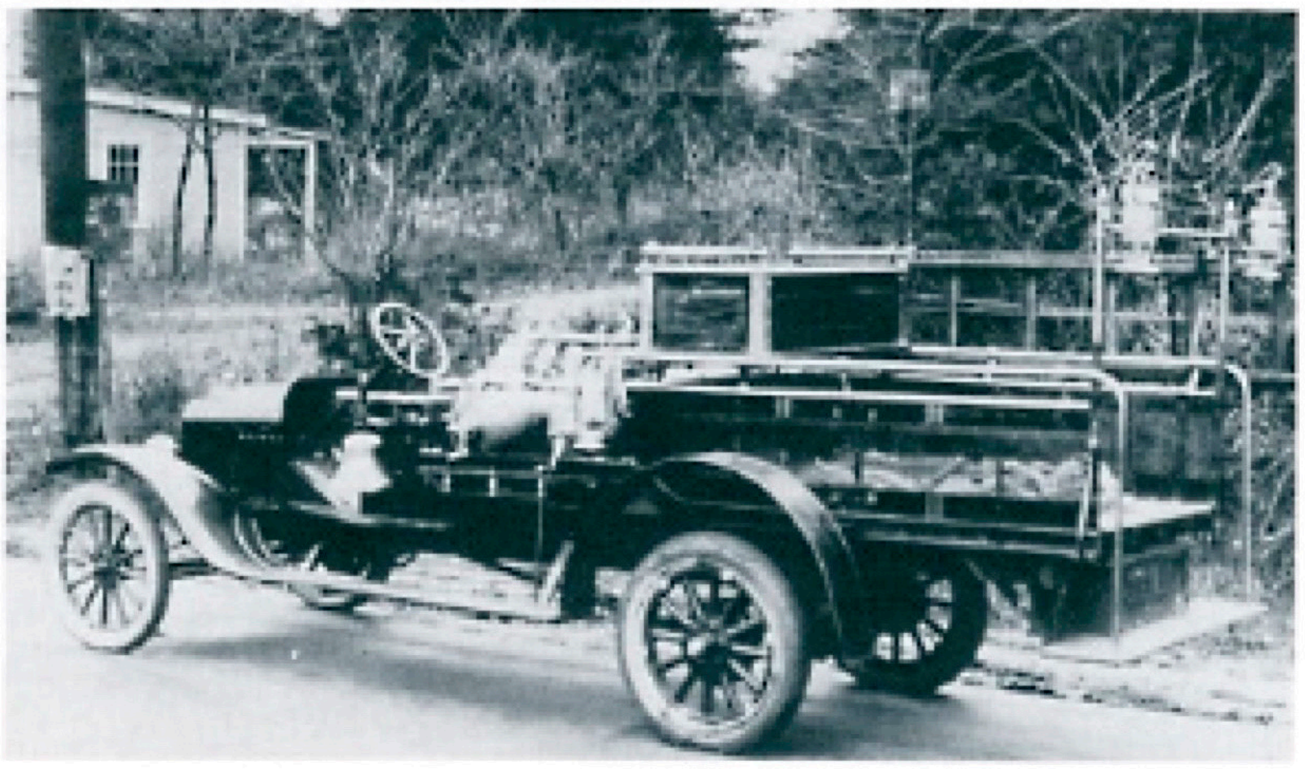
The first officers of the group were: J. Roger McSherry, Chairman; Judge James McSherry, Edward Koontz, Benjamin H. Blackstone, and J. F. D. Miller, Vice-Chairman; William M. Crimmins, Recording Secretary; William R. Henshaw, Assistant Secretary and H. R. Heck, Treasurer.

On March 27, 1892, the Constitution and By-Laws were unanimously adopted, and the 1st Maryland State Volunteer Firemen's Convention was held on June 7 and 8, 1893 in Frederick. [24]

Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department

As early as 1905, the citizens of Capitol Heights were thinking about how to cope with the problems of adequate fire protection. The number of fires in the town continued to rise, as did insurance premiums. In some cases, the companies even refused to cover losses due to fire.

Like other towns, the first form of fire protection was a bucket brigade, which was started by Mr. Harry Holmes, then Mayor of Capitol Heights, and Mr. Bert Adams. They recruited initially in Rider's Pool Room. The bucket brigade operated from a small shed located on land donated by Mr. Harry O. B. Zantzinger, at the corner of Central Avenue and 61st Avenue (now Capitol Heights



Boulevard). It was known as Volunteer Fire Company #1. Equipment consisted of six buckets and a ladder.[25] For the next few years, this was the only fire protection in this area.

The citizens of Capitol Heights improved their fire protection in 1908. A hand-drawn Chemical Wagon was purchased and placed in service by the bucket brigade. The group was still a loosely organized outfit, but managed to keep active. Further improvements were made when a used horse-drawn Steamer was purchased from the District of Columbia Fire Department in 1911. This unit was still in active service by the District. The delegation from Capitol Heights had to pickup the steamer from a fire where it was being used.[26]

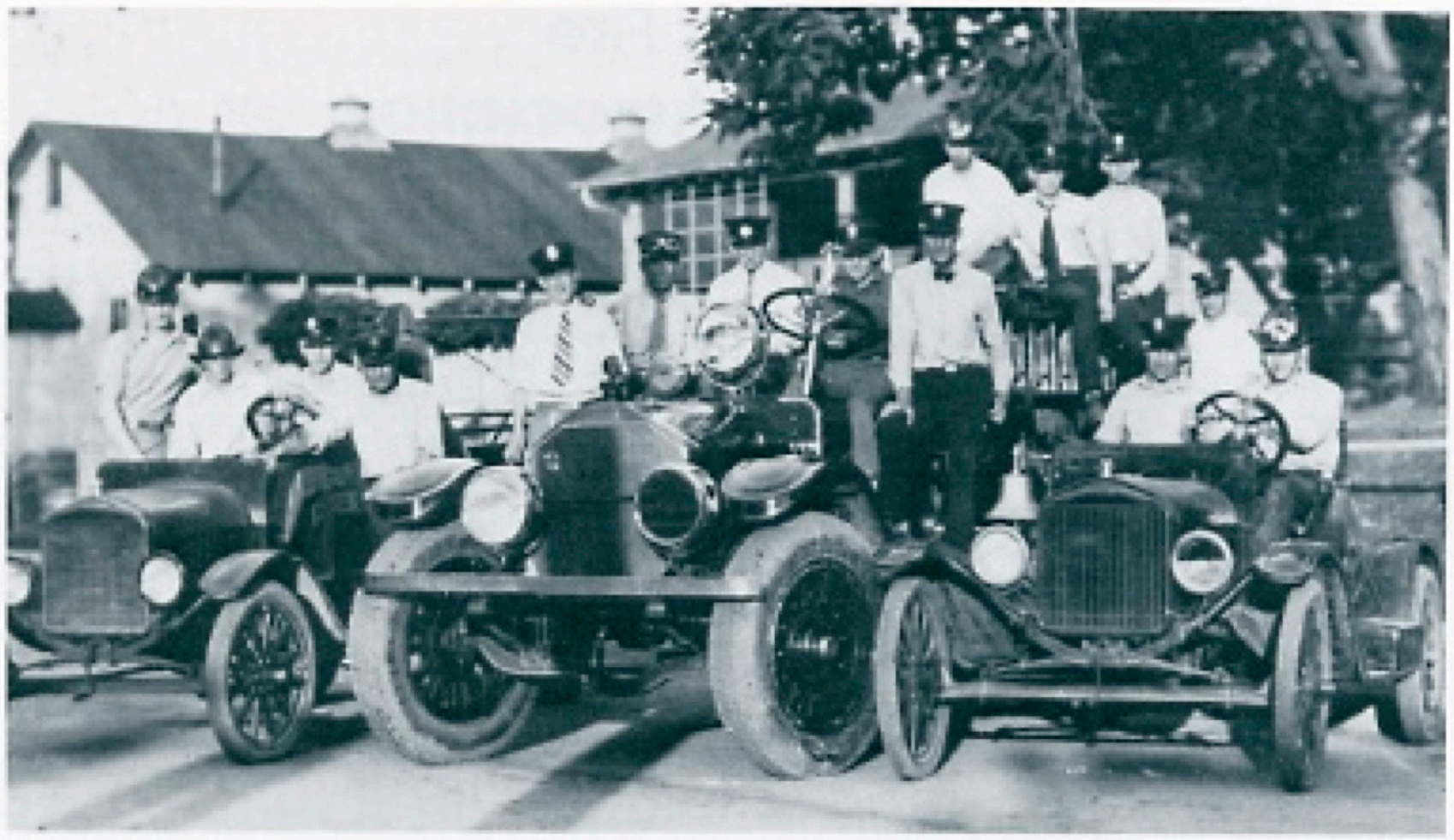
Around 1912, the company purchased a Ford Model "T" Truck. Members spent hours converting it into a fire engine by adding the chemical tanks from the old hand-drawn unit, ladders and other fire equipment.

Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department

The first formal meeting of the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department was held in John Klein's kitchen in February 1911. At the meeting, the following officers were elected: W. Vannemen, Fire Chief; John Kline, Assistant Fire Chief; M. C. Harmon, Secretary; and Ben Herron, Treasurer.

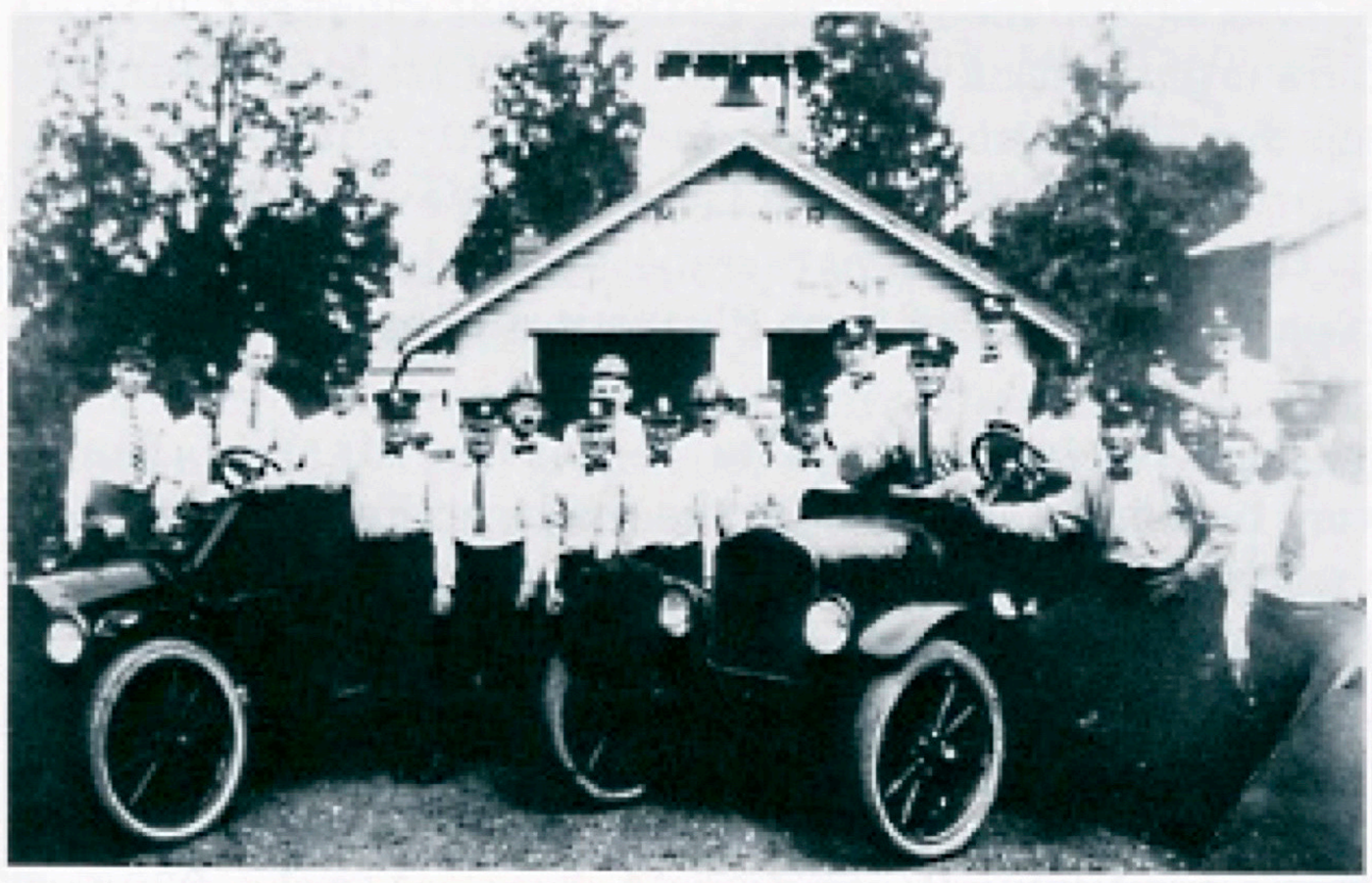
With contributions from the members and others, an $80 down payment was made on a 50-gallon hand-drawn Chemical Tank. The total cost of this first piece of apparatus was $250.[27]

In relentless pursuit of information and experience, members spent countless hours in the fire houses of the District of Columbia. There, the problems of the young company were the topics of many fire house conversations. These visits paid handsome dividends



in the areas of increased knowledge and training opportunities for the volunteers. Officers of the District Fire Department came to Mount Rainier and established an organized training program.

Always in need of money, ingenious methods were devised, such as the Lady Maccabees giving a recital, with the proceeds amounting to $80, used to buy a bell, which served as the fire alarm for a number of years. Before the end of the year, a lot was acquired and with materials donated by Yost and Herral, W. P. Magruder and Chas. H. Lightbrown, a wooden frame building was constructed by members.



The second motorized fire engine in the County was placed in service by the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department when they converted a 1913 Knox automobile into a hose wagon. [28] Mount Rainier was busy expanding their apparatus and bought a Ford Model "T" Chemical Truck as their second motorized fire engine.

The Mount Rainier Fire Department bought another Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon in 1917. This made the Department one of the best equipped with three motorized fire engines. Members from Mount Rainier also journeyed to Baltimore City three nights a week to attend a training course taught by the Baltimore Salvage Corps.

Riverdale Bucket Brigade

The Town of Riverdale was protected for several years by a chemical hose reel, kept in a small shed on the side of the Riverdale Park Company. It was organized during 1913 by a local policeman, Sergeant Owen Mulligan.[29]

Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire & Community Welfare Association

A new volunteer fire company was established during 1915 in Seat Pleasant, located in the center of the County. This new organization was called the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire & Community Welfare Association. This group was formed by civic minded citizens for the purpose of providing fire protection and community service to the area. As a community service oriented group, the Fire Department members provided food, blankets and clothing for unfortunate persons in the area of Seat Pleasant during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Ground for the first fire house was donated by Mr. Sam Collins and Mr. W. L. Main. Dances, carnivals, and dinners were held to raise funds for the construction. Members of the fire company did most of the work on this important project.

The original fire house building was a single story, one bay masonry structure which was later expanded with the addition of a second story and widening to accommodate three pieces of apparatus in 1920.

The first motorized piece of apparatus was a Ford Model "T" Smith-Form-A-Truck built from a 1916 Model "T." It carried two 30-gallon soda-acid chemical tanks, 200 feet of 3/4 inch booster hose and 300 feet of 2 1/2 inch fire hose. The piece also carried the usual compliment of axes, two portable 2 1/2 gallon soda-acid extinguishers and rope for pulling down chimneys. In addition, it carried a 14-foot ladder and ceiling hook.

The Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire and Community Welfare Association took it upon themselves to improve the streets and lighting for their community during 1918. Street lights, costing over $900, were erected throughout the area. In addition, the group paid for the electricity and maintenance of the lights.[30]

Berwyn Volunteer Fire Department

Though not formerly organized until 1919, the group was mentioned in a Washington Times report on May 3, 1918.

"Several merchants and businessmen in Berwyn, Prince George's County, Maryland, today are figuring up losses incurred yesterday when a fire of undetermined origins caused damage estimated at $20,000 in the business section of the city. Discovered in the feed store of McNamee Brothers, the fire spread to the grocery store of Sanford and Bryant, the Berwyn Grocery Store, the Knights of Phythias Hall, the mill of George W. Bryant, and the dwelling occupied by Mrs. Fannie Gittings, owned by H. A. Barrows. Students of the Maryland State College saved much of the furniture in Mrs. Gittings home.

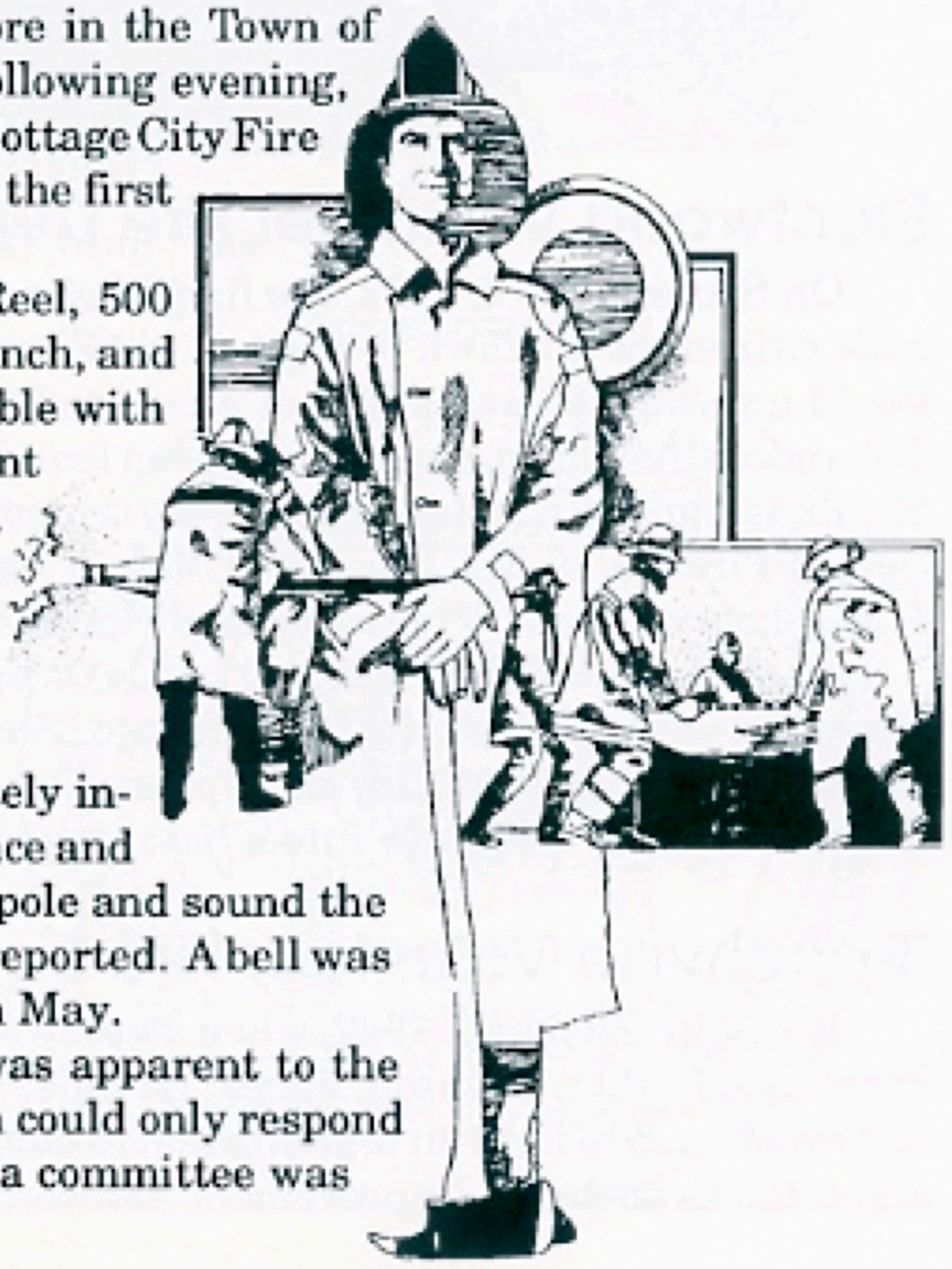
When the firemen of the Hyattsville Chemical Company and the Berwyn Volunteers found the fire getting beyond their control, an appeal was made for Company Number 24; from the District of Columbia Fire Department, which responded, but when the firemen reached the scene, the stores, mill and dwelling had burned to the ground."[31]

This group operated with one Hose Reel and a hand-drawn Chemical Tank. The equipment was housed at Trott and Owens Store near the old street car line and Berwyn Road. From its inception until around 1922, the company probably provided fire protection for the areas of Berwyn, Berwyn Heights and Branchville.

Cottage City Fire Company

On the night of March 23, 1922, a store in the Town of Cottage City was destroyed by fire. The following evening, twenty-seven men sat down to organize the Cottage City Fire Company. Mr. Charles Barrick was elected the first Fire Chief.

They purchased a hand-drawn Hose Reel, 500 feet of salvage fire hose, a nozzle, a plug wrench, and a small electric siren. This was made possible with the aid of $145 given to the new Department by the Cottage City Citizens' Association. Not having a fire station, the Hose Reel was kept at various locations throughout the town. In April, Chief Barrick resigned (for personal reasons) and Mr. T. Weston Scott was elected to take his place. He immediately installed a small siren at the corner of 40th Place and Parkwood. Mrs. DeWaters would go to the pole and sound the alarm to call the volunteers when a fire was reported. A bell was also installed on the temporary firehouse in May.



The need for a motorized fire engine was apparent to the group. The hand-drawn Hose Reel and men could only respond so far without tiring. On August 14, 1922, a committee was appointed to investigate the matter.[32]

Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department

This group was an outgrowth of an earlier bucket brigade. The new group was organized on August 2, 1922, with 35 charter members. George Wiseman was elected the first Fire Chief. Arrangements were made for the purchase of 500 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose and a nozzle. The whereabouts of the Barrel is today unknown. A Hose Reel was borrowed from the Cottage City Fire Company and kept in a shed. [33]

Brentwood Volunteer Fire Department

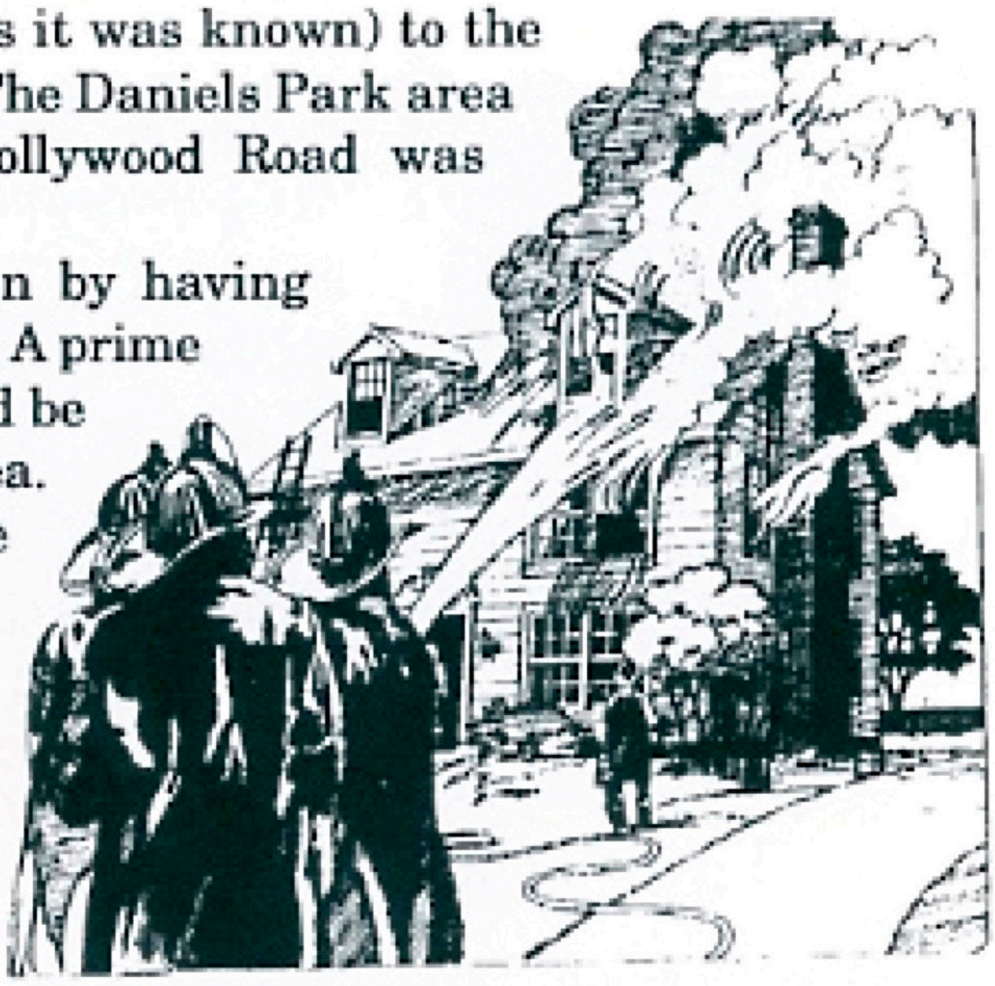
On September 14, 1922, the first Mayor of Brentwood, Mr. Lloyd Moxley, invited the male citizens of the town to meet at the Firemen's Hall at 37th and Tilden Streets. This would indicate the possibility of an older fire protection organization, which may have disbanded, though no records have been found to confirm its existence. Thirty-five charter members signed a charter for the newly organized Fire Department. Mr. Cecil G. Sipes was elected Fire Chief; Mr. Stephen Tillman, Assistant Chief; Earl Hutchinson, Secretary; J. M. Ehrmantraunt, Treasurer; and Frank Schmidt, Captain.

An old horse-drawn Hook and Ladder Wagon was purchased along with a hand-drawn Hose Reel with 500 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose. Shortly afterwards a firehouse was built in the rear of Chief Sipes lot at 37th and Upshur Streets. A Ford Model "T" chassis was purchased and converted by members into a hose wagon. [34]

Branchville Volunteer Fire Department

It was in October of 1922, when a group of citizens, Bowers, Gales, Sincell, Timmons, Parmalee, Parker, Johnson, Jones, LaValle, Wilson, and Baker gathered at the home of Melvin Bowers to form an organization to handle the needs of a growing community. That night, the Branchville Improvement Association was born with Mr. Bowers as President.

The south boundary of Branchville was the culvert on Rhode Island Avenue to Route 1 on the west (or the "Pike" as it was known) to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks on the east. The Daniels Park area from Rhode Island and Fox Street up to Hollywood Road was also included.



Money was raised for the new Association by having strawberry festivals, dinners and band concerts. A prime reason for the Association was to see what could be done about the lack of fire protection in the area. The closest fire companies were in Hyattsville five miles to the south, and Laurel 10 miles to the north.

The average home in the community was constructed of wood with wooden shingles. There were no fire hydrants and few telephones. To report a fire, one had to run down the road or cut across a field to a neighbors who had a phone to call the operator, who would then call the nearest fire company. Often, the only address given was "Sam Jones Barn" or the "Carter Farm."

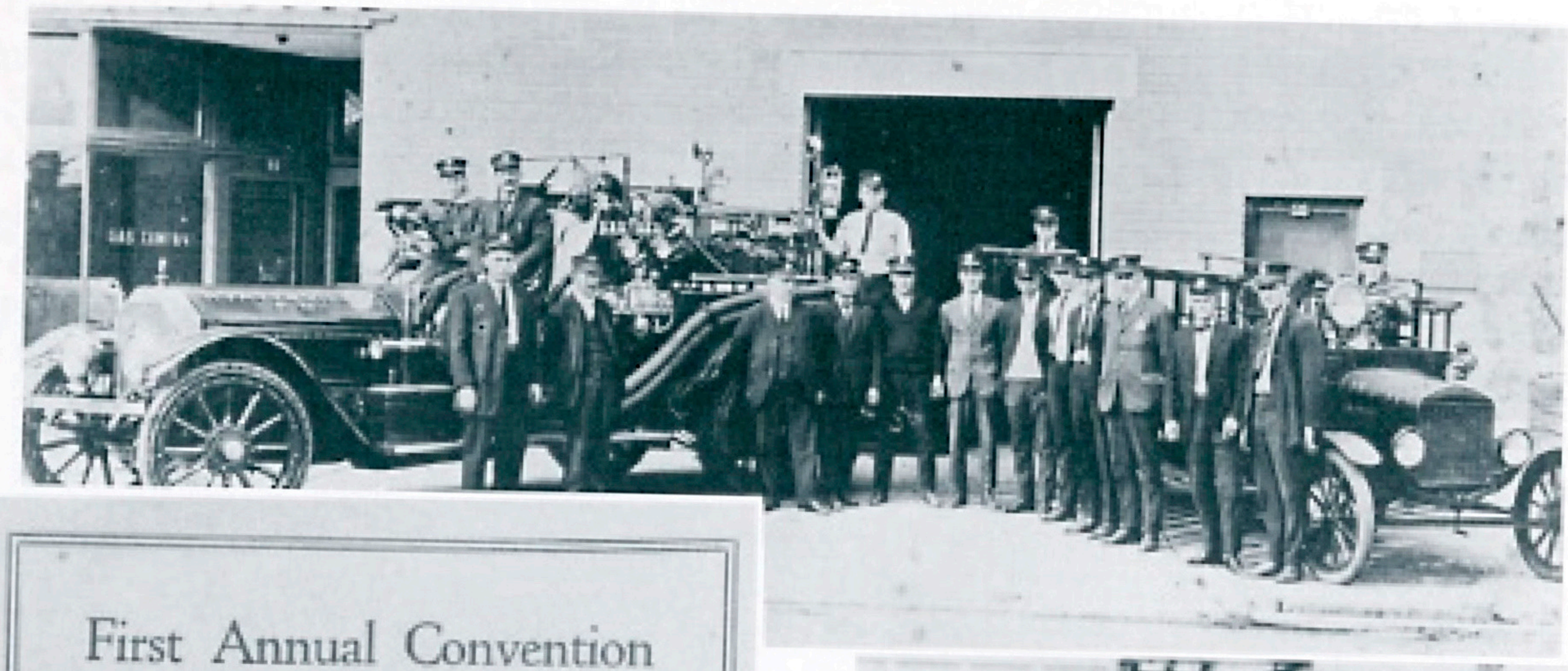
After twenty minutes or more, the incoming fire engines would be guided by the large column of smoke, usually arriving too late for the 50 gallons of chemical to subdue. Fire insurance rates were high, at 43 cents per $100 of value.

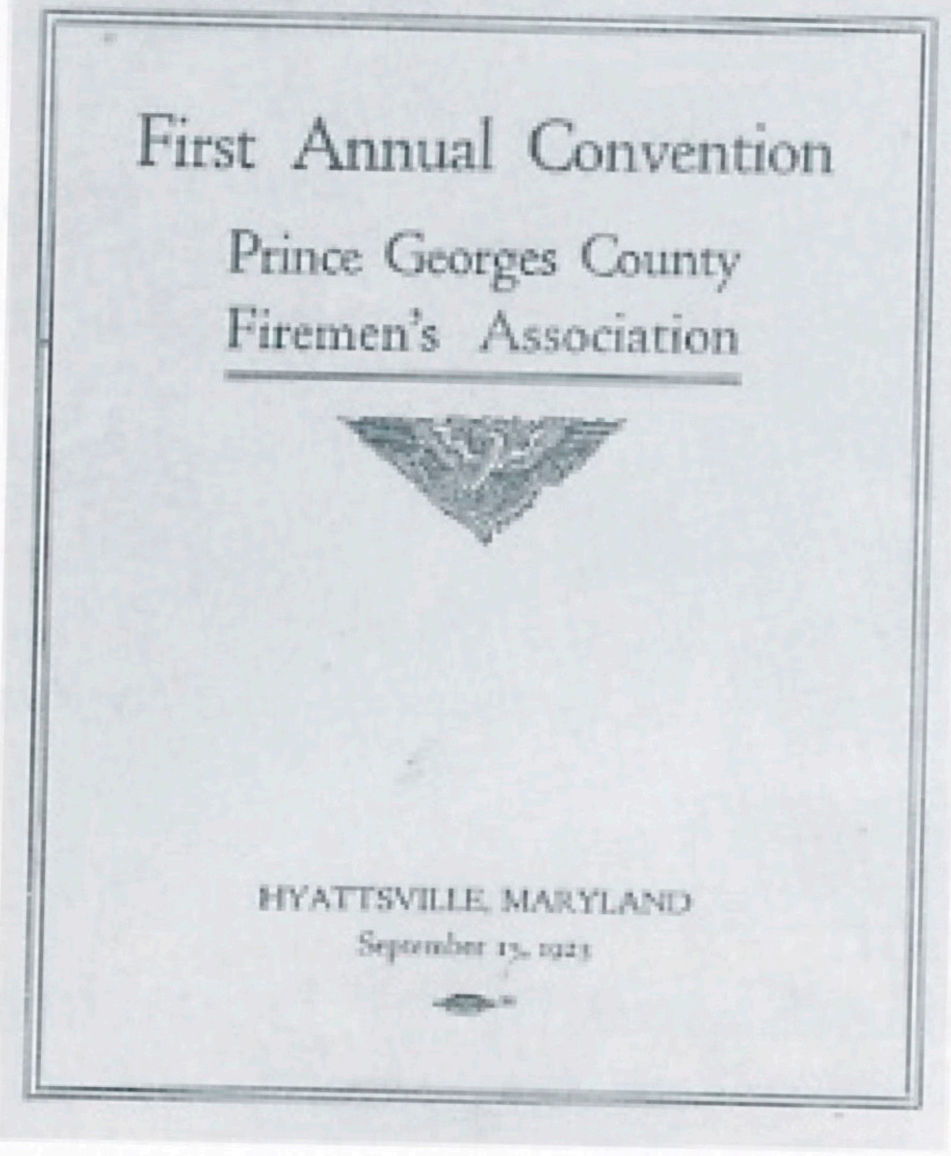
After several homes were totally destroyed, citizens saw the need for a fire company. It was 1923 before the young fire company could be formally organized and in operation.[35]

Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Association

In December 1922, representatives from the Volunteer Fire Departments of Hyattsville, Cottage City, Mount Rainier, and Brentwood met at the home of John Klein on 34th Street in Mount Rainier. There, they created the Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Association for the benefit of disseminating knowledge and education; and the added strength achieved through a mutual unity of purpose. Several active fire companies around the County did not initially join the Association. These included such Fire Companies as Laurel, Capitol Heights, Seat Pleasant, Bladensburg and Branchville.

The first officers elected were: John J. Fainter, President; John Kline, Vice-President; Stephen F. Tillman, Secretary; and W. B. Harrison, Treasurer.[36]



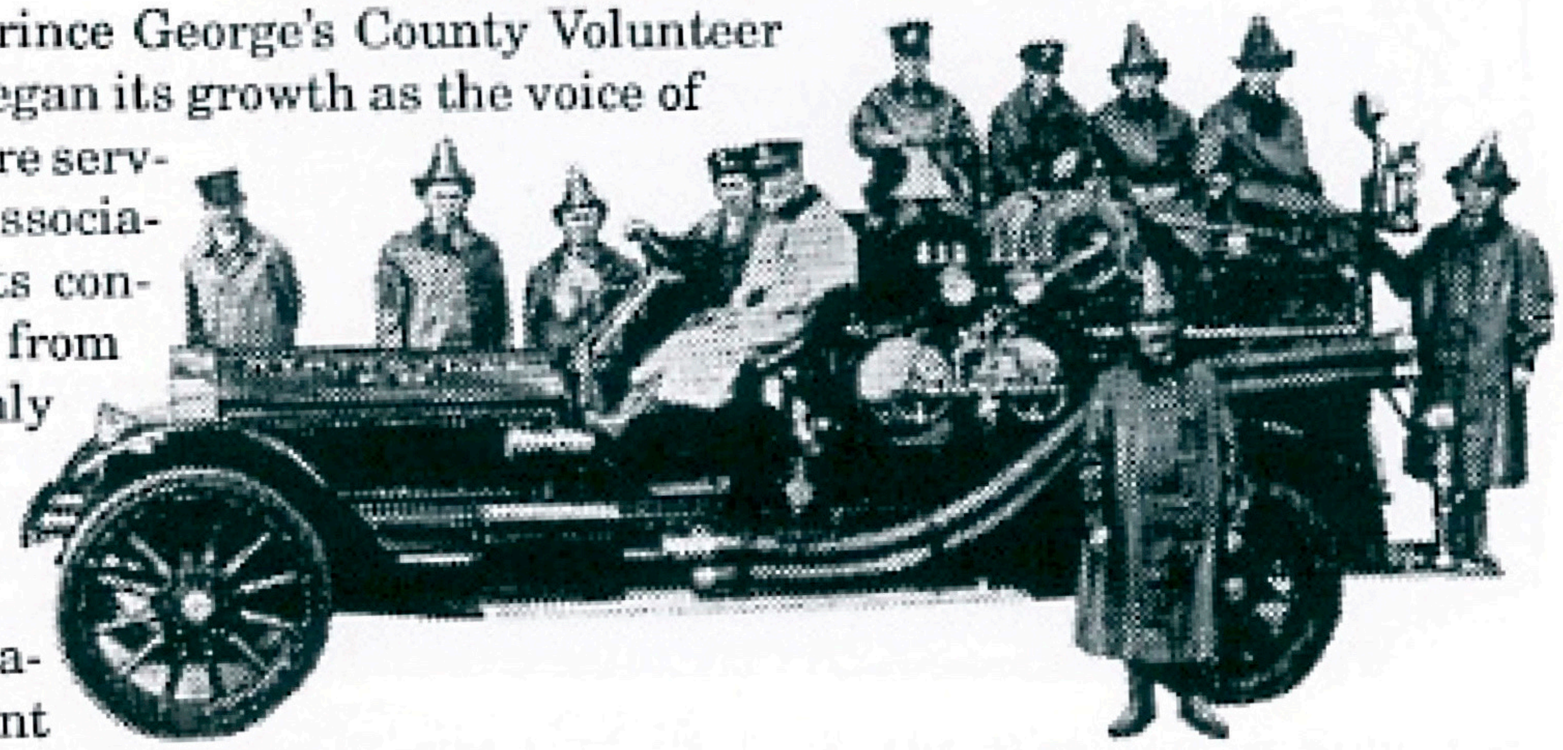

First Annual Convention
Prince Georges County
Firemen's Association
HYATTSVILLE, MARYLAND
September 15, 1923

Chapter Two

THE ASSOCIATION YEARS

1923

During 1923, the Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Association began its growth as the voice of the County's volunteer fire service. A sense of how the Association was growing and its concerns, can be gleaned from minutes of the monthly meeting held on August 10, 1923.



Mr. King, Acting President of the Association, urged the enforcement of laws giving fire apparatus the right-of-way on public highways. A committee was appointed to visit the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles in Baltimore, to request police powers for fireman while responding on the public highways of the County.

Weekly general alarm drills were suggested for the companies. Mr. White, of Seat Pleasant, said his company desired to take part in these drills and requested Monday, September 10, 1923, be designated as the date for the first drill. These drills developed a friendly rivalry between the various companies of the Association.

A general discussion was also held on the eligibility of the Takoma Park Fire Company for membership in the Association. While a portion of Takoma

Capitol Heights Ladies Auxiliary

On December 1, 1920, the Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary was organized, led by Mrs. Dora Quill. She felt the wives might see more of their husbands if they too became involved in the fire department. This group was the first organized fire department ladies auxiliary in the United States.

Like other fire companies, Branchville also saw the need for a motorized fire engine. In the spring of 1923, a fund drive was conducted by the members to purchase a new Ford Model "T" Chemical Truck. Specifications called for two hand-operated 35-gallon brass chemical tanks, a 250-pound gauge, 100 feet of 3/4 inch rubber hose, two brass kerosene lanterns, one box of soda and six bottles of sulfuric acid (the soda and acid were to be mounted on the right side of running board with a tool box on the left running board), one 10-foot extension ladder, which could be raised to 16-feet, a 3/4 inch exhaust whistle and a two inch brass bell above the hood. Tires were 33" x 3 1/2" and the unit was painted barn red for a price of $2,200.

The unit was first kept in a shed at Chief Timmon's residence located at 4912 Indian Lane. It was temporarily moved to Lt. Parmalee's garage before being housed at Al Johnson's garage at Branchville Road and Rhode Island Avenue, a central location in the town. [39]

Park was in Prince George's County, the Takoma Park Fire Company's Headquarters was located within Montgomery County. [37]

The volunteer fire companies began the slow process of improving fire protection in the County. This included the purchase of better equipment and the construction of permanent fire houses. Funding for the improvements was done mostly without government funds. Bingos, dinners, dances, and door-to-door solicitations were used instead. Often these events still did not generate enough money, and members used their own funds to keep the fire company operating.

Association News:

- The 1st Annual Prince George's County Volunteer Firemen's Convention was held in Hyattsville on September 15, 1923.
- An auxiliary to the Branchville Improvement Association was formed and called the Branchville Fire Department of the Improvement Association. The first officers elected were: Leroy Timmon, Chief; Albert Johnson, 1st Assistant Chief; Mr. Parmalee, Lieutenant; and Russel Jones, Engineer.

New Equipment:

- Cottage City started a fund drive on January 1, 1923 to purchase their first motorized fire engine. By April, a used Ford Model "T" was purchased and converted to a fire engine by the members.
- Bladensburg purchased a used Simplex 500 g.p.m. engine from the Norristown (Pennsylvania) Fire Department.

Communications:

- The method of alarm in Branchville was to call Miss Kitty Moore or Miss Alfreda Baker, the phone company operators. The exchange was located at 4900 Central Avenue (now Berwyn Road). They would call Mr. Johnson at his home, and he would race upstairs to his bedroom and yank on a rope, which would rock the fire bell mounted outside his house. This bell could be heard over a large area. The men hearing the bell would race to fire house and respond on the call with the fire engine. [38]

Sydney Volunteer Fire Department

Little is known about this department as few records are in existence. The Fire Department was located in the central area of the County. There only known piece of equipment was a hand-drawn Chemical Cart. The Fire Departments of Seat Pleasant, Capitol Heights, and Greater Capital Heights were nearby. Some of the early members included: Mr. Forsythe, Mr. Scofield, Mr. Doyle, Mr. Brugger and Mr. Jackson. The Fire Department was disbanded around 1926.

Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department

The Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department grew out of the former Riverdale Bucket Brigade operated by Sergeant Owen Mulligan.

On January 23, 1923, Mayor J. B. Waters called a mass meeting to organize the Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department. One of the strong motivations behind the town starting its own fire department was that by 1923, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission had begun laying water mains and plugs throughout the area. This allowed the town to have adequate water for the operation of modern firefighting equipment.

William C. Gray was elected as the first Fire Chief. Shortly afterwards, town fire insurance rates dropped from .64 cents to .32 cents per $100 of assessed values. Later the rates were again reduced to only .27 cents.

By April of 1923, through the cooperation of the Riverdale Citizen's Improvement Association and the Town Council, enough funds were collected to purchase a Buffalo-Ford 250-gallon per minute pumper. Some of the money was later refunded through a bill passed by the Maryland General Assembly, which authorized a .25 cent tax levy for one year to pay for the equipment. [40]

Seat Pleasant Ladies Auxiliary

This group held its first meeting on September 13, 1921, at which the following officers were elected: Mrs. Cooper, President; Mrs. Rudolph, Vice-President; Mrs. Litz, Secretary; and Mrs. Orme, Treasurer. Others present at this meeting included Mrs. Barnes, Carrick, Dant, Deavers, Fisher, Gregory, Gray, Hampton, Hasting, and Ward. They held dinners to raise money for the firemen.

Boulevard Heights Volunteer Fire Department

In March 1923, after a series of fires in the community, a meeting was held at Albert Stewart's house to form a fire department. In attendance were Albert Stewart, Ed Johnson, Ray Samon, George Green, Walter Shipley and Paul N. Tierney, Sr.

The first equipment for the new department were 12 water buckets obtained from the profits of a lawn party. William Wolfe was elected the first Fire Chief. [41]

Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department

In 1922, Albert Johnson, in conjunction with the Berwyn Improvement Association, donated a lot to the former Berwyn Fire Department, north of Berwyn on Branchville Road.

Arguments ensued as to where the fire equipment should be kept and sometime in 1923 the Berwyn apparatus was moved to Berwyn Heights, where it was kept in Buffington's garage. Since the membership was split, two new departments were organized in 1924, the Branchville Volunteer Fire Company and the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department. The Branchville Company kept the land and Berwyn Heights kept the charter and fire equipment.

1924

The Association continued to grow in both membership and organization during its second year of existence. They attempted to establish new fire companies in the County where fire protection was needed. By the end of the year, there were 11 active volunteer fire companies in the County. Most of these were located in the central and northern portions of the County.

Association News:

- Members of the Association met with the County Commissioners in Upper Marlboro on January 22, 1924. During the meeting, it was recommended a volunteer fire company be organized and maintained at Upper Marlboro under the supervision of the County Commissioners. It seems the earlier Marlborough Fire Association had disbanded, though their equipment was still housed in town. [42]
- With the growing membership, it was decided a method of numbering fire companies was needed. At the June 4, 1924 meeting of the Association, a motion was made to establish the numbering system. On motion of Mr. Atwell, as amended by Mr. Kneesi, it was voted that the four organizing companies should draw for the first four numbers, that the remaining four charter companies should draw for the next four numbers, and that the other three companies should be assigned numbers in the order of their joining the Association.

"On motion of Mr. Atwell, it was voted to draw these numbers immediately. On motion of Mr. Venemann, it was voted that the Secretary should draw the numbers, naming the company he was drawing for as each slip was drawn.

The numbers are to be assigned as follows: Number 1 to Hyattsville; Number 2 to Cottage City; Number 3 to Mount Rainier; Number 4 to Brentwood; Number 5 to Capitol Heights; Number 6 to Sydney Fire Company; Number 7 to Riverdale; Number 8 to Seat Pleasant; Number 9 to Bladensburg; Number 10 to Laurel; and Number 11 to Branchville."[43]

As each new fire company was admitted in the future, they were assigned the next available number.

On March 15, 1924, two months after the meeting between the Association and the Commissioners, fire raged through Upper Marlborough destroying much of the town. The fire started on the roof near the chimney of Bennett's Lunchroom and Hotel around noon. The Court House bell was rung, and telephone calls frantically notified the town residents. Due to the high wind, efforts to extinguish the fire were futile. By the time the fire was brought under control, it had completely destroyed the lunchroom, the buggy and carriage shop and a large two-story house. Two other buildings were also destroyed. Valiant efforts of the bucket brigade managed to save two structures on the north side of Main Street. Urgent calls for help were made to the Eastport Fire Department and the District of Columbia Fire Department. The District dispatched Engine Company 9, but the pumper was unable to draft water from the Western Branch. Eastport arrived only to find smoldering embers. Soon a move was underway to reorganize the needed fire company.[44]

New Equipment:

- Hyattsville purchased a Cadillac from Mr. Rogers and the members converted it to a Hose Wagon at a cost of $2,300. A used horse-drawn Ladder Truck was bought from the District of Columbia at a cost of $3,300. Later, this unit was motorized by members with the addition of Nash tractor.
- A combination Chemical and Hose truck was built by the members of Riverdale during the year.
- A Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon was purchased by the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department as their first piece of motorized fire apparatus.

Branchville Ladies Auxiliary

The Branchville Ladies Auxiliary was formed on September 26, 1925. This group was organized by Mrs. Annie Burnette, known as "Ma." They helped with dinners, carnivals, and other fund raisers for the fire company.

Communications:

- Hyattsville had bells installed in the homes to ensure drivers were aware of fire alarms.

New Stations:

- Cottage City acquired a lot on old Barney Street (now 38th Avenue). The first permanent firehouse was soon erected on this lot by the members.
- The Town of Riverdale moved quickly to provide the fire department with a fire station for the equipment purchased the previous year. During an elaborate Independence Day celebration, ground was broken for a new firehouse and municipal center. Within a month, the building was ready for use, complete with a chamber for the Town Council.
- Boulevard Heights members erected a 12 foot by 18 foot garage to house their hand-drawn cart on the corner of Shadyside and Washington Avenue.

1925

Running assignments for the fire companies were started in 1925. The various fire companies divided up the areas they wished to respond to alarms in. Multiple companies were assigned to each block area to insure adequate coverage, with the exception of Laurel. The first assignments were: Mount Rainier and Brentwood; Cottage City and Bladensburg; Hyattsville, Riverdale and College Park; Branchville and Berwyn; Capitol Heights, Sydney, and Seat Pleasant.[45]

The Branchville Fire Company held monthly meetings at Johnson's Pool Room, on the second Thursday. The company was existing at the time on raffles and door-to-door solicitations.

Association News:

- Three new companies joined the Association: College Park (Company 12), Riverdale Heights (Company 13), and Berwyn Heights (Company 14).
- A member of Hyattsville, and past President of the Association, Mr. John Fainter, was elected as President of the Maryland State Firemen's Association.

New Equipment:

- While always willing to assist neighboring fire departments, a certain apprehension was felt by the Cottage City Fire Company over leaving the town without adequate fire protection. It was thought the Ford, which was greatly overloaded, might breakdown while responding to a fire. This would endanger not only the lives of the crew it was carrying, but would also leave the areas of Cottage City, Colmar Manor and Moyer's Park without adequate fire protection. Cottage City was convinced that should a large fire occur, there would be an urgent need for a pumper. In July 1925, a Robinson chain-driven pumper was purchased at a cost of $800 and placed in service.[46]
- Boulevard Heights purchased a used 1925 Ford Model "T" chassis during the year. The members converted it into a fire engine by mounting 35-gallon chemical tanks and constructing a hose body on the chassis.

Communications:

- A fire siren was installed on the new Cottage City Firehouse, replacing the old bell, which often couldn't be heard by members.

New Stations:

- Mount Rainier began building a modern brick firehouse in March 1925. Members and citizens pitched in, performing the construction work on the new building.

• Branchville made plans to build a new and larger firehouse. Mr. J. H. Wilson, Harry Jones, and Herbert Arrow contacted another local civic organization known as the Community Center of Berwyn. On December 2, 1925, a lot was purchased on Branchville Road which measured 33 feet by 48 feet for the sum of $10. Members canvassed every house selling cement blocks for .25 cents each for the one-story 24-foot by 40-foot building. It was constructed entirely by volunteer labor with members working far into the night excavating, mixing concrete, laying cement blocks and doing the hundred of other odd jobs needed.[47]

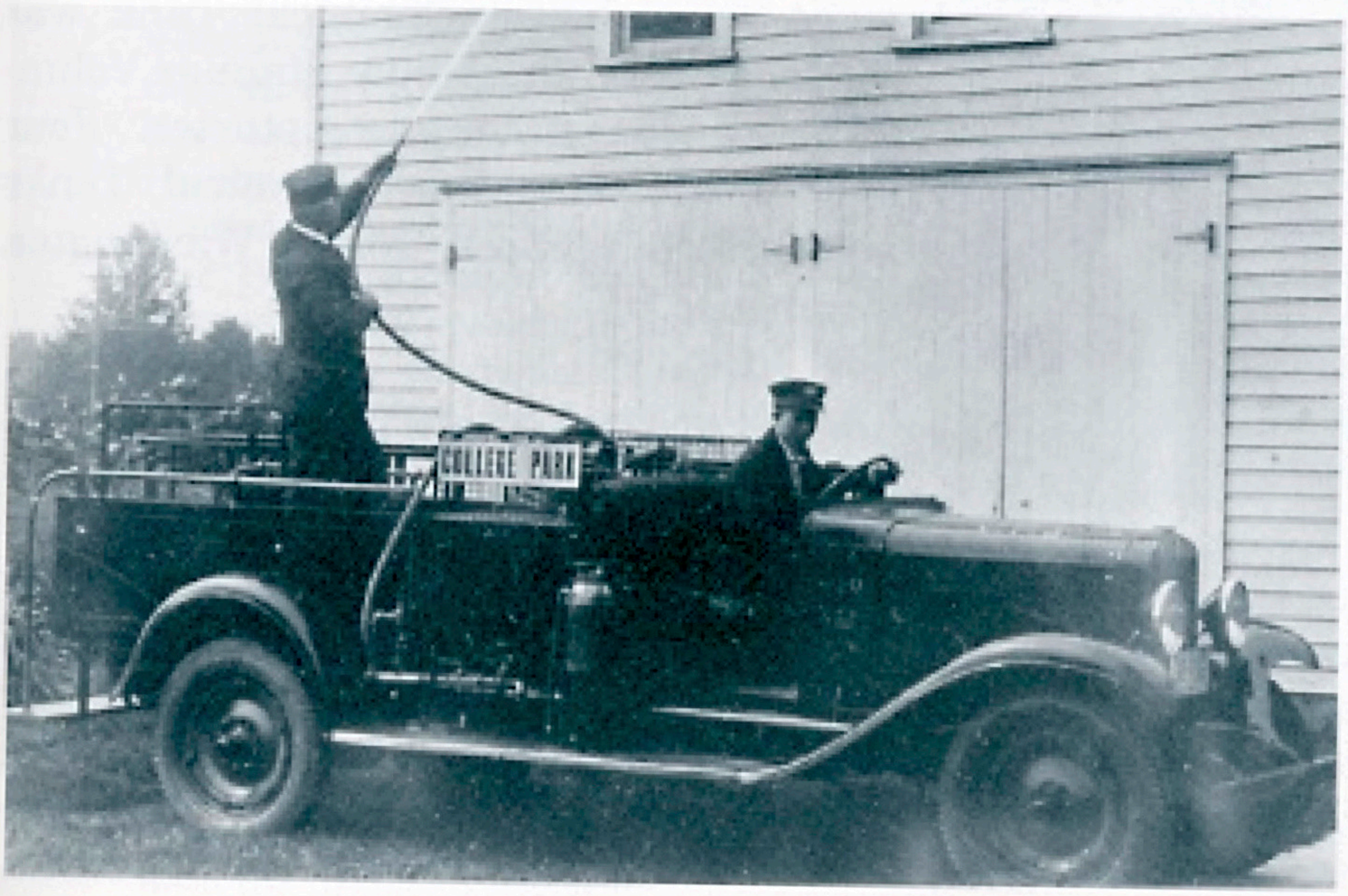
College Park Volunteer Fire Department

On January 13, 1925, a small group of citizens comprising the Home and School Association, gathered for their monthly meeting. College Park was beginning to grow and it had been in the minds of these citizens that fire protection was needed for the area. After much discussion, a committee was appointed to organize a fire department.

There is no record of the original committee members, but they drafted a set of Constitution and By-Laws, and named the organization The College Park Volunteer Fire Department.

A meeting was held in the schoolhouse on March 2, 1925, at which time the Constitution and By-Laws were adopted and 14 men joined the Department. The group elected Dr. Henry B. McDonnell, Chief; Mr. Monroe Powers, Assistant Chief; Mr. Joe Asasisso, Captain; and Mr. H. A. Shank, Secretary-Treasurer.

The original Constitution provided for three companies: Number 1, located in the residential portion of College Park and vicinity, including equipment other than that belonging to the University; Number 2, the fire equipment of the University under the direction of the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, who was the ex-officio Captain (Professor H. L. Crisp); and Number 3, the fire equipment of the Experiment Station, in charge of the Director who was the ex-officio Captain (Dr. H. J. Patterson).



Chief McDonnell was in charge of the Chemistry Department at the University of Maryland and through his connections, a hand-drawn Hose Reel and a two-wheel Soda-Acid Extinguisher were acquired. In addition, 25 members of the Home and School Association purchased soda-acid extinguishers, which were kept in their homes to fight fires.

An obsolete horse-drawn Chemical Wagon was purchased from the District of Columbia Fire Department along with a used 1921 Atlas truck chassis from the Connecticut Pie Company. The new department now faced the task of transferring the hose bed, chemical tanks and other useful equipment from the Hose Wagon to the truck chassis. They used a barn in the rear of Captain Crisp's house on Harvard Avenue (now 7400 Rhode Island Avenue). Here, the members spent many hours assembling the town's first fire engine which was placed in service on November 1, 1925. Chief McDonnell also purchased used 2 1/2 inch hose from the District for 2 cents a foot.

The first call for the new company was on December 13, 1925. Over the next year of operation they responded to 25 calls. With equipment on hand, the next problem was to obtain a firehouse. The need came to the attention of Mr. Elmore Power, one of the early developers of College Park. Since he was both progressive and public spirited, he donated a lot at 4813 Calvert Road for construction of the first station. [48]

Riverdale Heights Volunteer Fire Department

The community of Riverdale Heights was subdivided during 1920 from farm land owned by the Stephen family. The community was slow in developing and in July 1925, after a series of mysterious Saturday night fires put the town on the defensive. A committee was formed to organize a fire department.

The committee consisted of Mr. Clifton S. Kernan, Mr. Tom Flanagan, Mr. Marion W. Watts and Mr. Joe Zottoli. Meetings were held and the first temporary organization was formed with Mr. C. S. Kernan as Chairman and Mr. Lawrence W. Nelson as Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Ted C. Gardner was elected the first Fire Chief.

A hand-drawn Chemical Tank was borrowed from the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department as a starter. Four hand-drawn 50-gallon Chemical Tanks were also purchased from a Washington warehouse.[49]

Mount Rainier Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary to the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department arose from a successful card party given by the wives of several firemen.

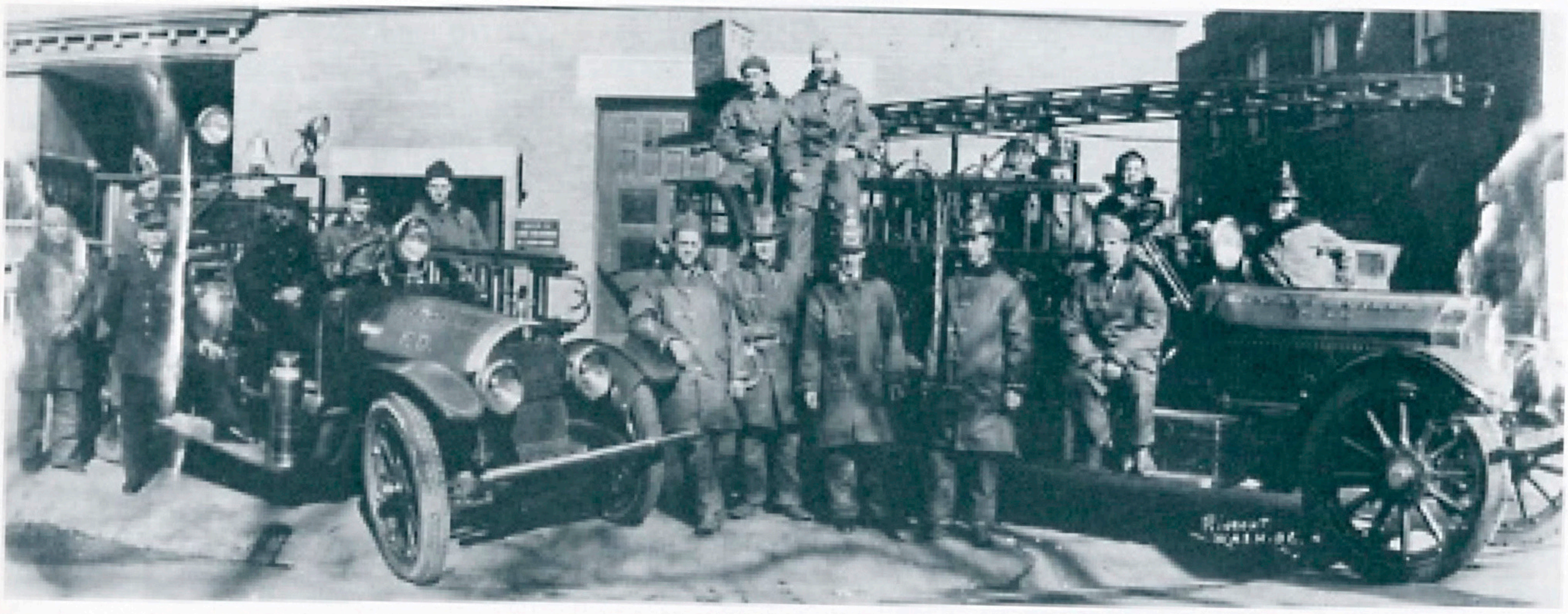
On August 23, 1926, the organization elected its first officers: Mrs. F. H. Crown, President; Mrs. M. C. Harman, Vice-President; Mrs. H. E. Wilson, Secretary; and Mrs. Robert McCallam, Treasurer. They assisted the firemen by raising funds to pay off the debt incurred in erecting the firehouse. Through various fund raisers, they were able to donate $935 to the firemen.

Marlboro Volunteer Fire Department

After the town suffered the heavy loss during the fire on March 1924, citizens again looked to the organization of a new fire department. Various meetings were held, and committees were appointed during early 1925. The new department had a very meager sum in its treasury, but voted to purchase a Buffalo Fire Apparatus Chemical Fire Truck. This piece consisted of two 35-gallon soda-acid chemical tanks, one roof ladder, one extension ladder, and three or four brass Deitz Oil Lanterns mounted on a Chevrolet chassis.

This equipment proved very effective on small fires; however, it was of little value on building fires unless the fire department arrived on the scene quickly. The original fire house and equipment of the Marlborough Fire Association was used by the new fire department.[50]

1926

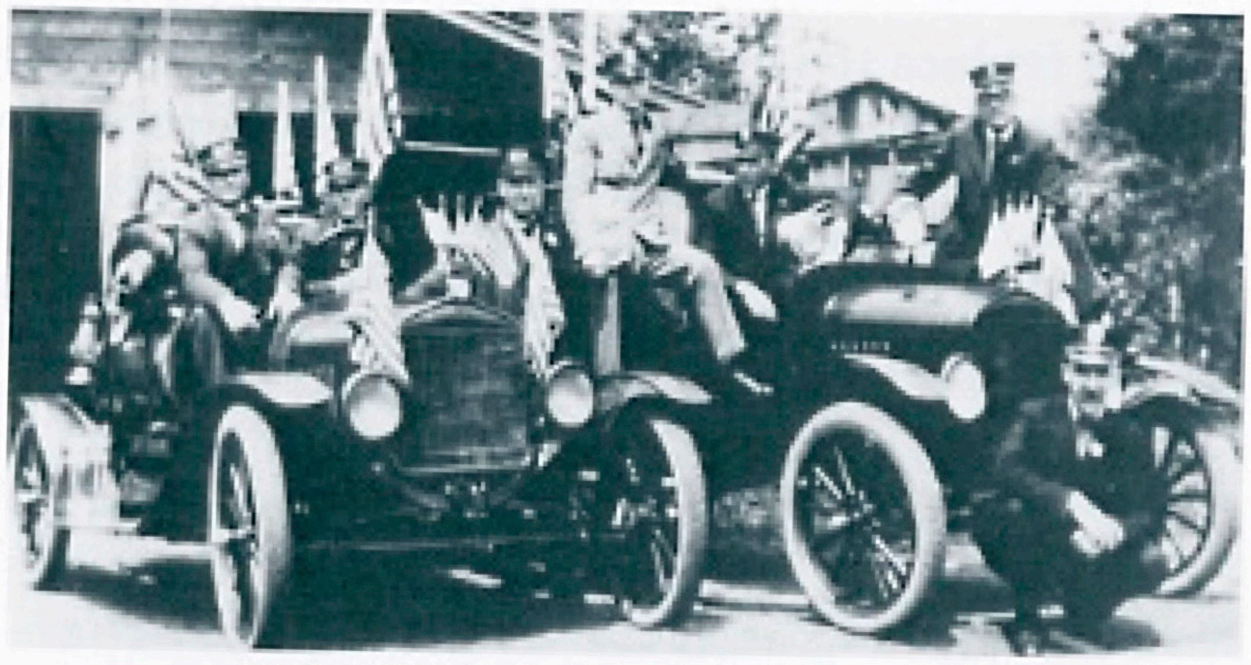


The 4th Annual Convention was hosted by the Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department. Membership in the Association remained even with the addition of Greater Capitol Heights (Company 15), and the disbanding of the Sydney Fire Company (Company 6).

New Equipment:

- Cottage City purchased a Brockway Fire Engine to replace the aging Ford Model "T."
- The Mount Rainier Fire Company placed in service a new American LaFrance Fire Engine.
- Riverdale Heights purchased a Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon. The members added two 30-gallon chemical tanks to the chassis.
- Boulevard Heights added a second chemical tank and another 150-feet of rubber hose to the fire engine they had constructed the prior year.

Communications:



- Chief Simmel completed negotiations with the telephone company to have the Cottage City fire siren blown by the telephone operators in Hyattsville. The company also complained to the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department that there seemed to be a problem in the dispatch system. At the time, the telephone operators in Hyattsville would receive the calls and in turn, call the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department to find out which fire departments to dispatch. The phone operator would then call the Chief of the responsible company and sound his company's siren. Cottage City felt that, often, Hyattsville would take calls in their area without sufficient cause.[51]
- The fire alarm system used in College Park was a far cry from the present efficient radio system. There was a bell over the firehouse with a long rope attached to it. When a fire was discovered, the residents called the Berwyn telephone operators. She in turn, called the nearest neighbor to the firehouse who could be reached. This person would rush to the firehouse and ring the bell until the firemen arrived.[52]

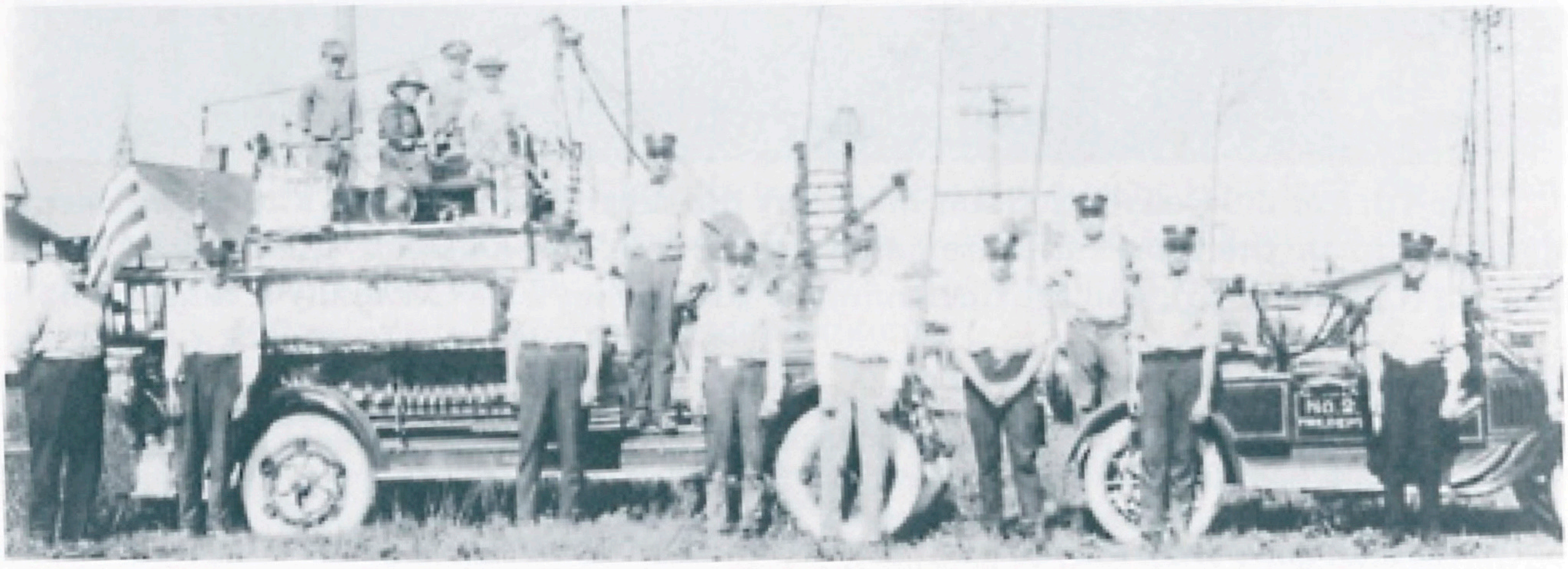
New Stations:

- Bladensburg hosted a carnival to raise needed funds for construction of a new fire station. Members constructed a cement block building which was completed in the spring of 1926. Members later built a social hall on the first floor and a maintenance shop in the basement.
- College Park constructed a fire station on Calvert Road, it was finished in the early part of August. A bridge had to be constructed in front of the station, as a stream blocked the entrance onto Calvert Road. This building is still standing and owned by the company.

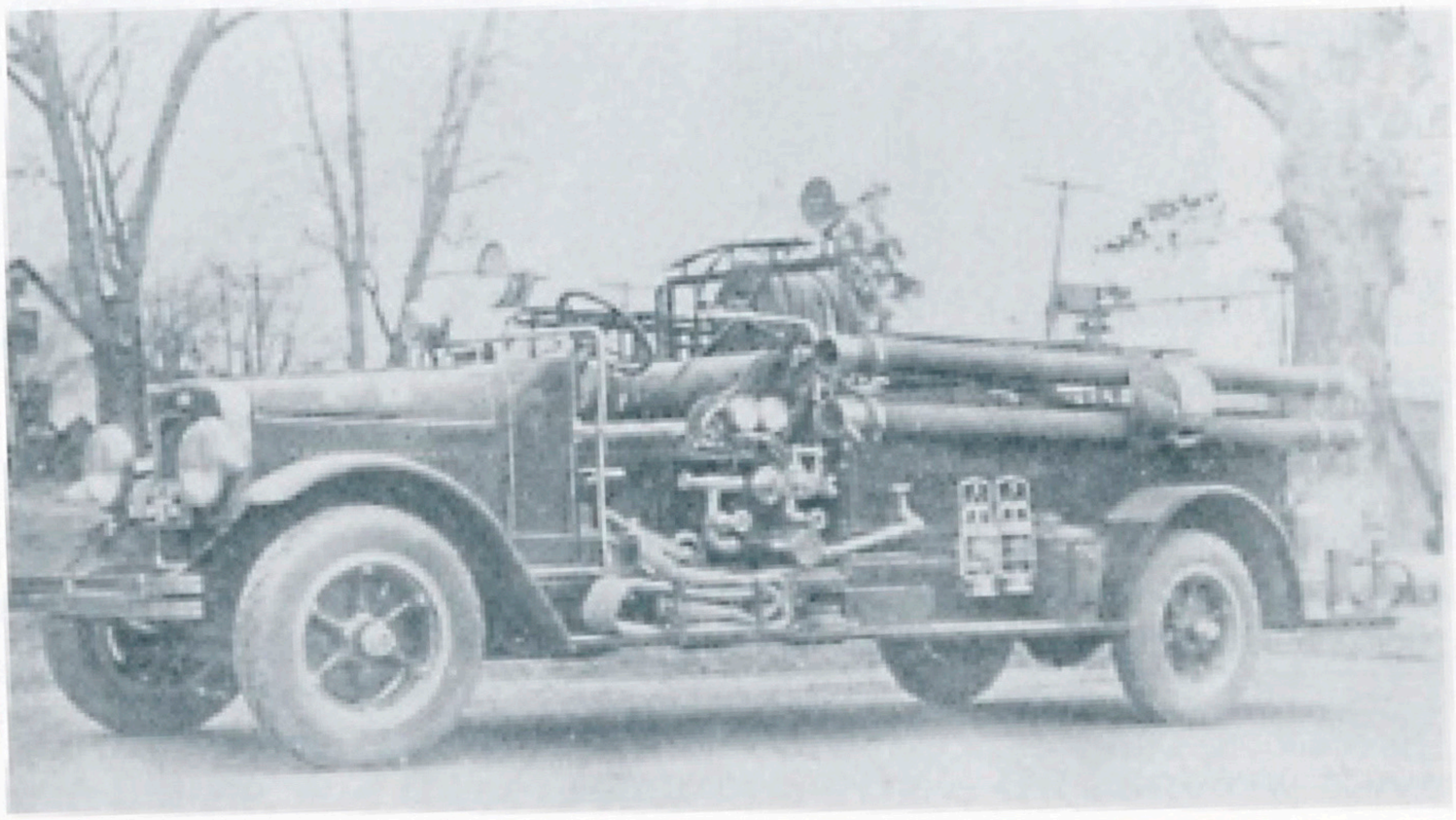
Fire Prevention:

- The Town of Brentwood adopted a Fire Department Ordinance Number 39, on May 24, 1926. This gave Brentwood needed local fire prevention rules and regulations. These included fines of $25 to $40 for reporting false alarms, and fines of $5 to $15 for following fire apparatus within 300 feet. Additionally, it gave the fire company fire prevention duties, which included inspection of public assembly halls, dances, movie houses and other public events.[53]

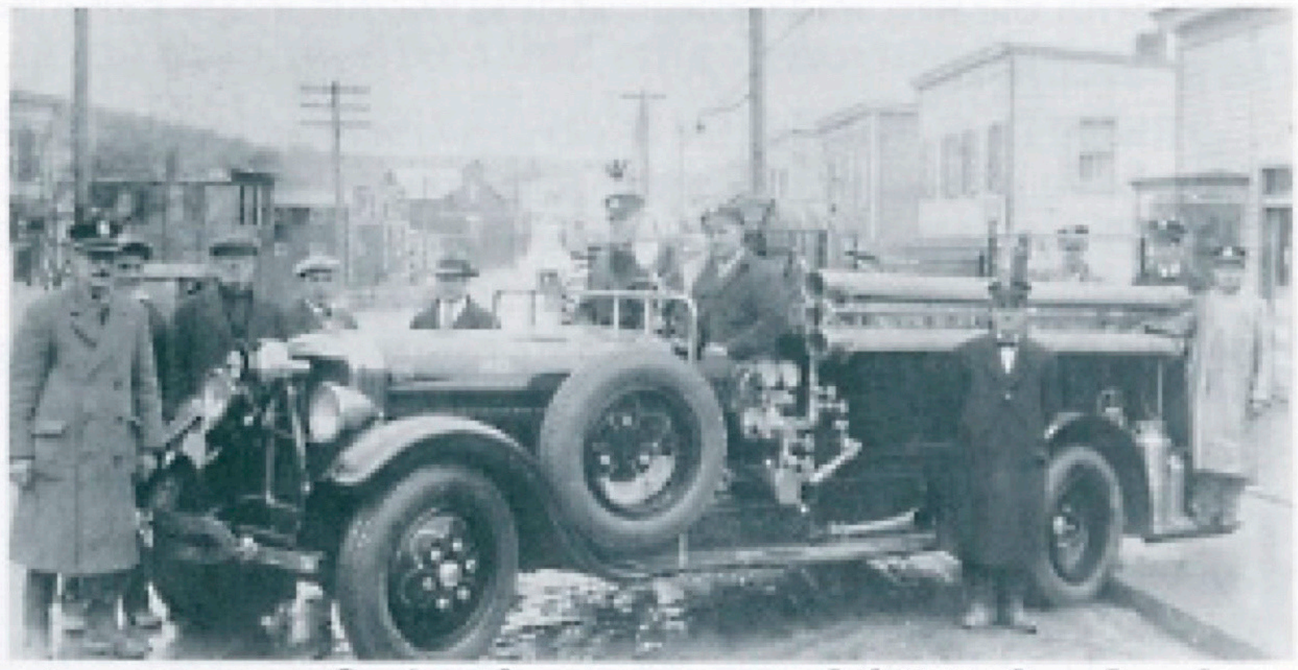
Greater Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department No. 2



Few records have been found for this organization. However, photographs have shown the department owned at least two motorized fire engines. The group was started during 1926 to replace the disbanded Sydney Fire Company. Equipment was housed in a small garage near William Tierney's home. Some of the early members included: William J. Tierney, John Koday, I. R. Worthington, George Essig, Bud Fritz, W. T. Miles, Norman Worthington, Joe Aulter and Rue Fritz. Years later, the fire department changed its name to the Hillside Volunteer Fire Company and requested the disbanded Sydney Volunteer Fire Company's Number 6, be assigned to the reorganized fire department.[54]



1927



The first Workman's Compensation Program was created in the County during the year. The Volunteer Firemen's Relief Fund in Prince George's County Act, was passed by the Maryland General Assembly and put in effect on January 1, 1927. It provided funds not to exceed $2,000 per annum be available from County tax money. Payments were made in the amount of $150 for death or permanent total disability; $25 per week for temporary total disability not to exceed four weeks; or $15 per week for temporary partial disability.[55]

Several major fires kept firemen busy during the year. The Christian Brothers property was one of the fires. Responding from Branchville, Chief Deeck, stopped and notified the phone operators to send more help. It seems the entire northern sky was aglow. Somehow, the operator skipped Laurel and called Baltimore City. They dispatched a unit which arrived 45 minutes later.[56]

The second fire occurred at the Bowie Race Course destroying the Grandstand, Clubhouse and office buildings in a fire of undetermined cause on June 10, 1927. Fires burned out of control, because the nearest fire companies in Laurel and Bladensburg, were over 10 miles away.

Marlboro Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary to the Marlboro Fire Department was organized in 1928. During World War II, the group folded bandages weekly for the Red Cross. Bingos, card parties, raffles, newspaper collections and dinners have been used to raise funds. The money was donated to the Fire Department earmarked for equipment purchases or fire house improvements.

Association News:

- Membership grew with the admission of Boulevard Heights Number 1 (Company 16) and Boulevard Heights Number 2 (Company 17). The Rescue Squad was also admitted.
- The State Legislature passed a bill which created a fund of $5,000 for the maintenance and replacement of fire equipment in the County. Distribution of the money was worked out after much debate. In the end, a plan evolved to distribute the money regardless of whether a fire company needed it or not. It would be distributed as follows: each pumper company (Class A), $350; each non-pumper company (Class B), $300.
- The College Park members began to feel a charter was needed for their organization. A charter was presented on February 14, 1927, for consideration. It stated the purpose of the organization was to protect and safeguard the lives and interest of all persons and property holders in the Town of College Park. It named the firehouse as the "fire-engine building." The first five members of the Board of Directors were: Henry B. McDonnell, Harry J. Patterson, Wirt Harrison, William Holbrook and Samuel S. Steinberg.[57]

New Equipment:

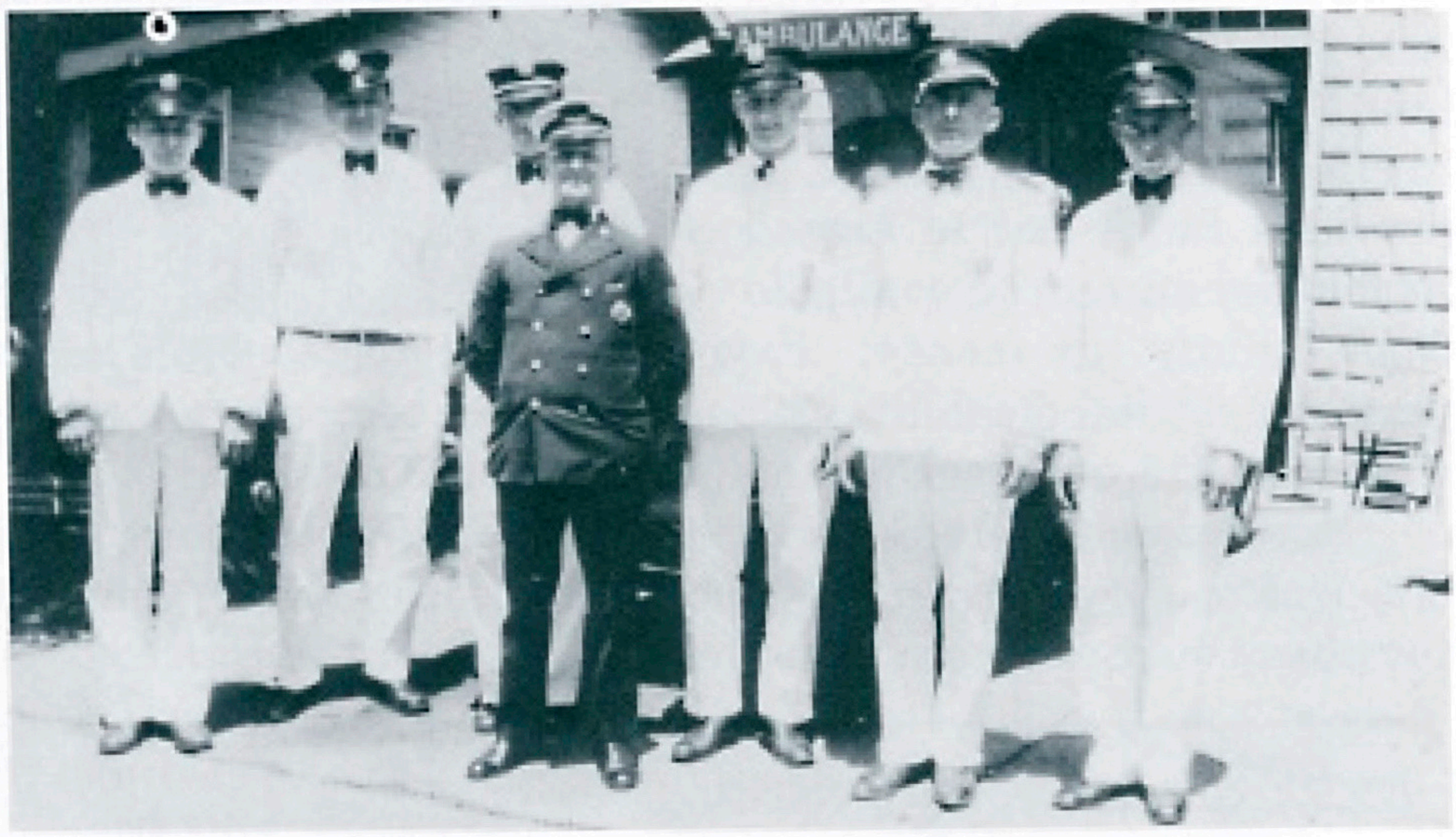
- Bladensburg's Simplex Pumper was beginning to show wear. A Brockway Chassis was soon purchased and the pump and other equipment were transferred to the new truck. This new vehicle had several interesting items. First, it had a glass windshield to protect the driver; secondly, it had the booster tank piped directly to the main pump.

- A second Chemical Truck was built by the Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department and kept on the west side of the railroad grade crossing. Within a short time, this second company was combined with the first and incorporated as the Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department.

New Stations:

- Riverdale Heights started construction of their new fire station without a cent in the treasury. The building was constructed through the energy, cooperation and determination of the members. The cement blocks were made at the home of Francis T. McCann, a local stonemason.

Rescue Squad



The big news for the year was the organization by Mr. H. L. Leonard, Manager of the Washington Suburban Gas Company, of the first Rescue Squad Unit in the County. The concept was to provide members of the volunteer fire companies and their families with medical assistance in emergencies. However, the concept quickly changed to answering calls for assistance from the public. The unit offered free transportation, though donations were gladly accepted.

On April 11, Mr. Leonard asked each member company of the Association to designate four men to receive first aid instruction. The class was held on May 6 in Mount Rainier. Dr. Leonard was elected as the first Chief of the Rescue Squad.

The first ambulance was a 1927 Buick which was owned by Mr. Leonard. Patients would sit in the seat next to the ambulance driver as they were transported to either the hospital or a doctor's office. With no hospitals located in the County, patients were transported either to Baltimore or Washington, D.C. Bandages and other equipment were supplied by squad members.

Hyattsville purchased an old American Linen Truck and converted it into an ambulance. Members of the Department did much of the work at the shop in the evenings. Once completed, it was brought to the firehouse to be placed in service.

Disagreements arose, and Mr. Leonard and several other members left Hyattsville and took the ambulance to Bladensburg. The unit was the first of many placed in service.

First Aid Classes were taught using the Red Cross and other sources of information. Records indicate it was the first County-Wide Rescue Squad in the world. [68]

1928

There were 16 active fire companies with 405 active members and 1,533 reserve members. Fire equipment consisted of nine pumpers, six with chemical, two with booster pumps, and two with pumps alone. There were four hose wagons, one hook and ladder, nine trucks with hose and chemical and six with chemical alone. This made for a fleet in the County of twenty-six pieces of fire apparatus.

In January, fire engines and crews from Hyattsville, Mount Rainier, Brentwood, and Riverdale assisted the District of Columbia Fire Department in fighting one of the many general alarm fires. A fire bug was busy setting multiple alarm fires throughout the city. County units were dispatched to a fire at the Pillsbury Warehouse, located on H Street.

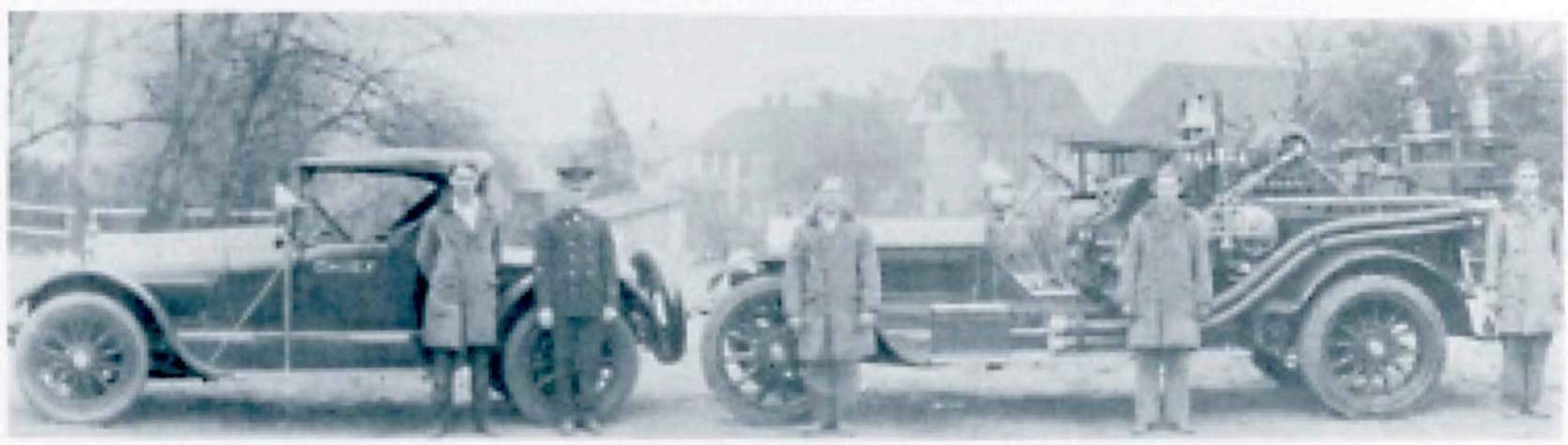
FIREBUG SUSPECT WAS HOSPITAL PATIENT
Volunteers Prove Worth

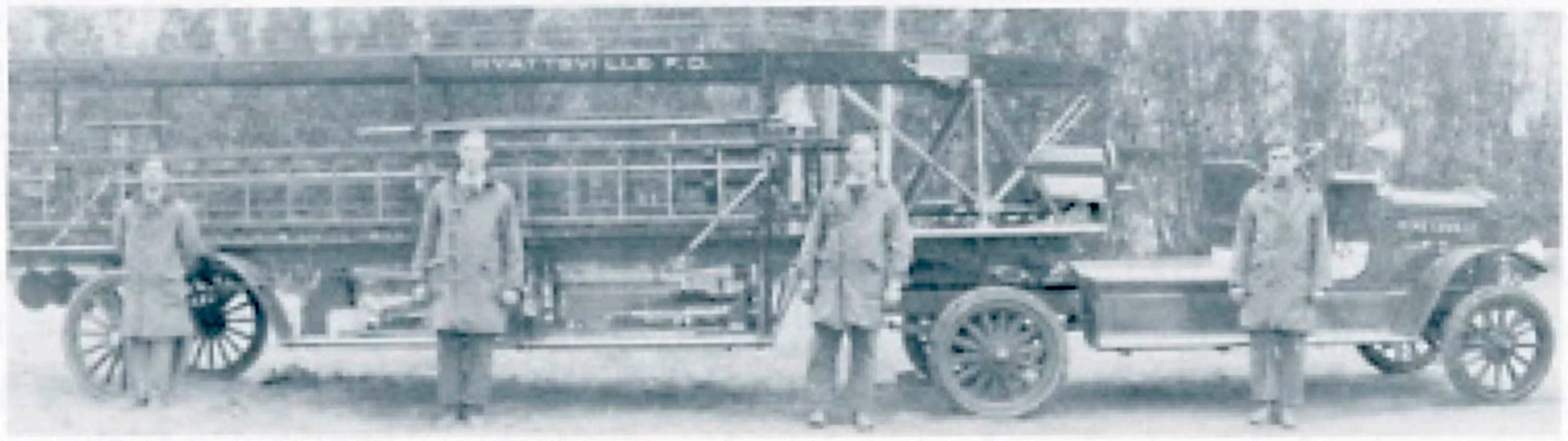
"It was at the Pillsbury Warehouse that the volunteers put in their best work. Because other fires had taken all available city apparatus, only the volunteer companies remained to fight this one, which turned out to be one of the biggest and most spectacular. The companies from Brentwood, Mount Rainier, Riverdale, Hyattsville, and one from Potomac, Virginia, fought this fire virtually alone when it was at its height, and managed to contain it to the hay and straw-filled brick structure.

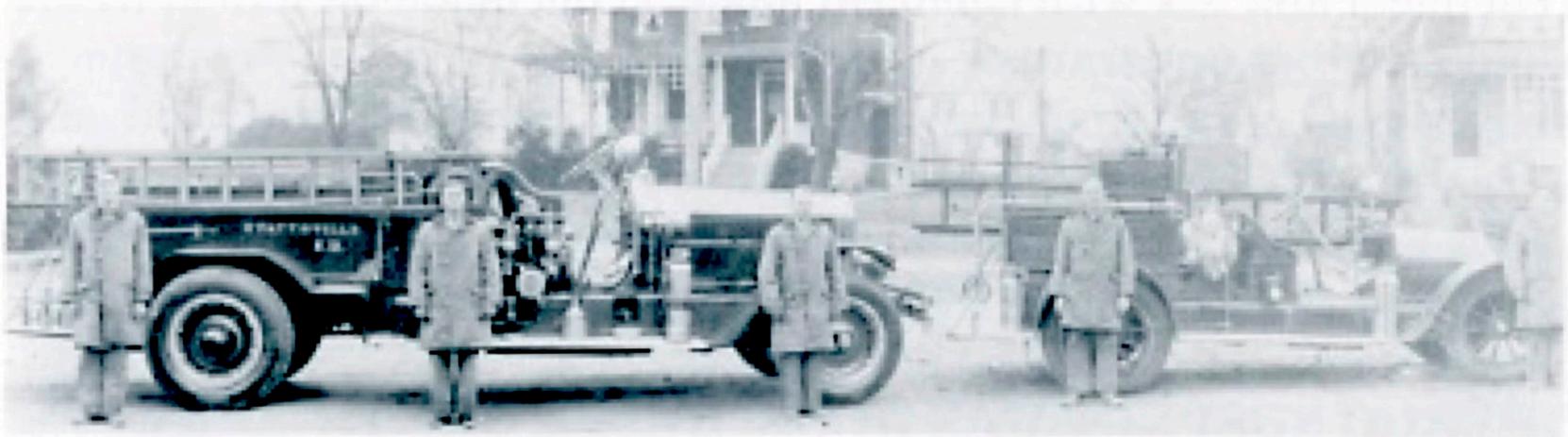
Two volunteer firemen were injured at this fire, and one was removed to Casualty Hospital. Paul Beckert of the Mount Rainier Company was overcome by smoke while fighting the fire from the roof of the Northeast Auto Exchange, a one-story building adjoining.

James Daugherty of the Brentwood Fire Department received a badly lacerated left leg. His injuries were treated by the Washington Gas Light Company crew, who responded in their emergency wagon to the call.

Spectators and city firemen alike, were loud in their praise of the work of the volunteers. They took their stations at the fire plugs nearest the building like veterans and soon had streams of water spraying from three sights: the H street front, the area in the rear, and one on 1st Street N.E. The fire was pretty well checked and confined to the Pillsbury Building by the time Number 7 engine was released from the New York Avenue fire and reached the scene. [59]







Association News:

- Membership grew with the admission of Glenn Dale (Company 18) and Bowie (Company 19).
- Greater Capitol Heights, Number 2, held elections on December 26, 1928, and elected the following officers: Mr. William J. Tierney, Chief; Mr. William T. Miles, Assistant Chief; Mr. C. C. Carter, President; and Mr. Forest Coles, Secretary. [60]
- During the year a court battle was fought between Boulevard Heights Number 1 and Number 2. A letter from Boulevard Heights Number 2 to the Association highlighted the problems.

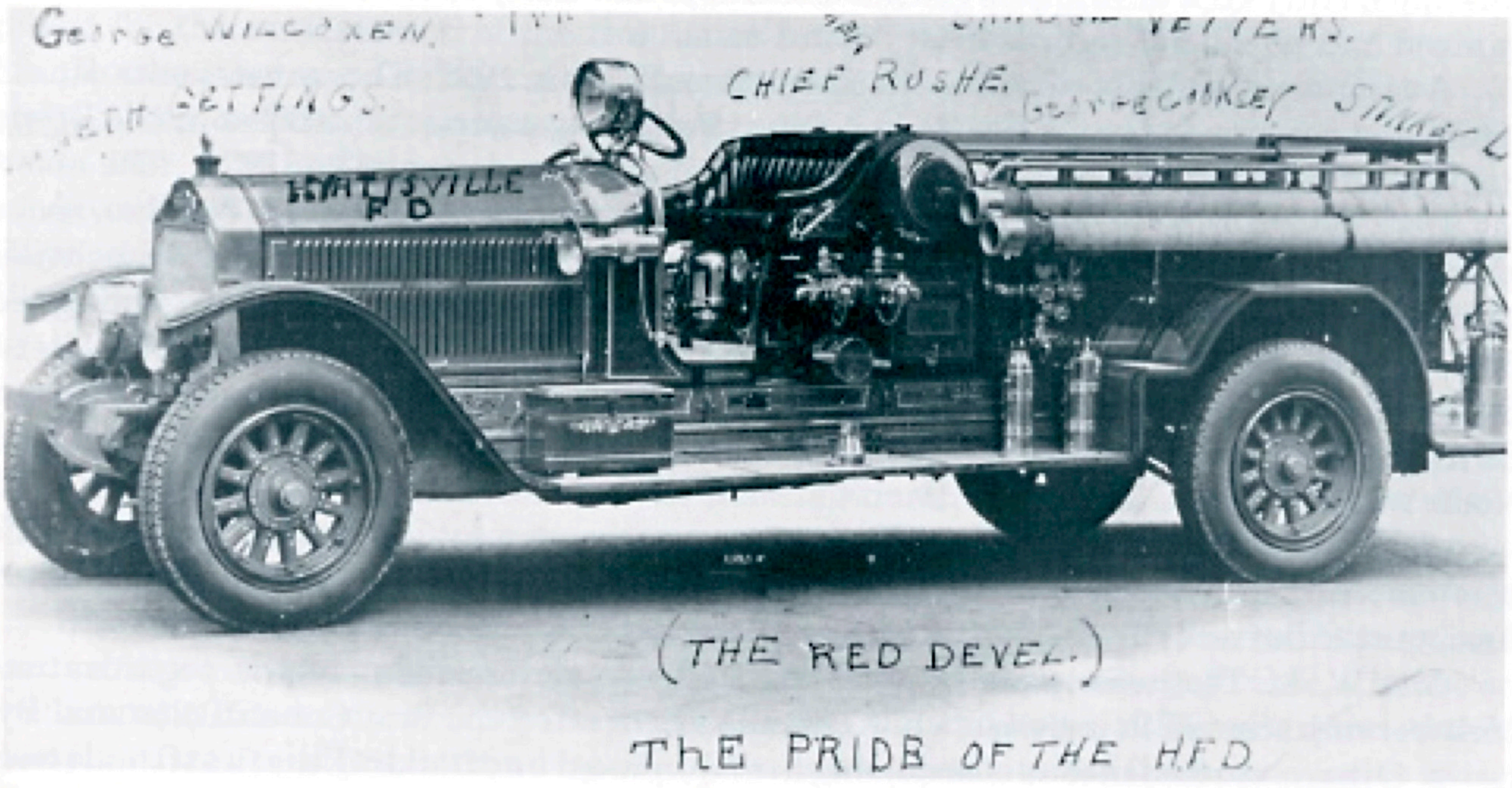
"We the undersigned Trustees of Boulevard Heights Volunteer Fire Department wish to have you read these facts before your Association for the information of all whom it may concern.

The so called Fire Department Number 1 brought suit in the Circuit Court to recover the property and $400. The Court decided they were not a Fire Department, but a Fire Company and Citizen's Association and dismissed the case and giving the trustees power to act as they please.

We gave them notice to move out at a certain time which they failed to do. We waited 28 days after the notice expired. So the trustees, two out of three, which is a majority, have taken possession and put them out. The Washington Times published a piece stating that Chief William Smith and his men had taken possession which is all wrong. The two trustees acted and moved them out, which we had a right to do, so don't blame the Fire Department, blame the Trustees if you want to blame anyone.

There is no such thing as two Fire Departments in any town or city. We wish you would list the Fire Department as The Fire Department and cut out the idea of Number 1 and Number 2. The Fire Department is going to get a new engine and then they can use their badges and caps for Number 2. We claim there is no Number 1 Department as the Court has ruled that way. They have failed to attend but a few fires and therefore we feel they are not entitled to any money from the County."[61]

Shortly afterwards, the Association recommended Number 2 be the only recognized fire company authorized membership. Boulevard Heights Number 1, Company Number 16, was disbanded and the number was never reassigned.



New Equipment:

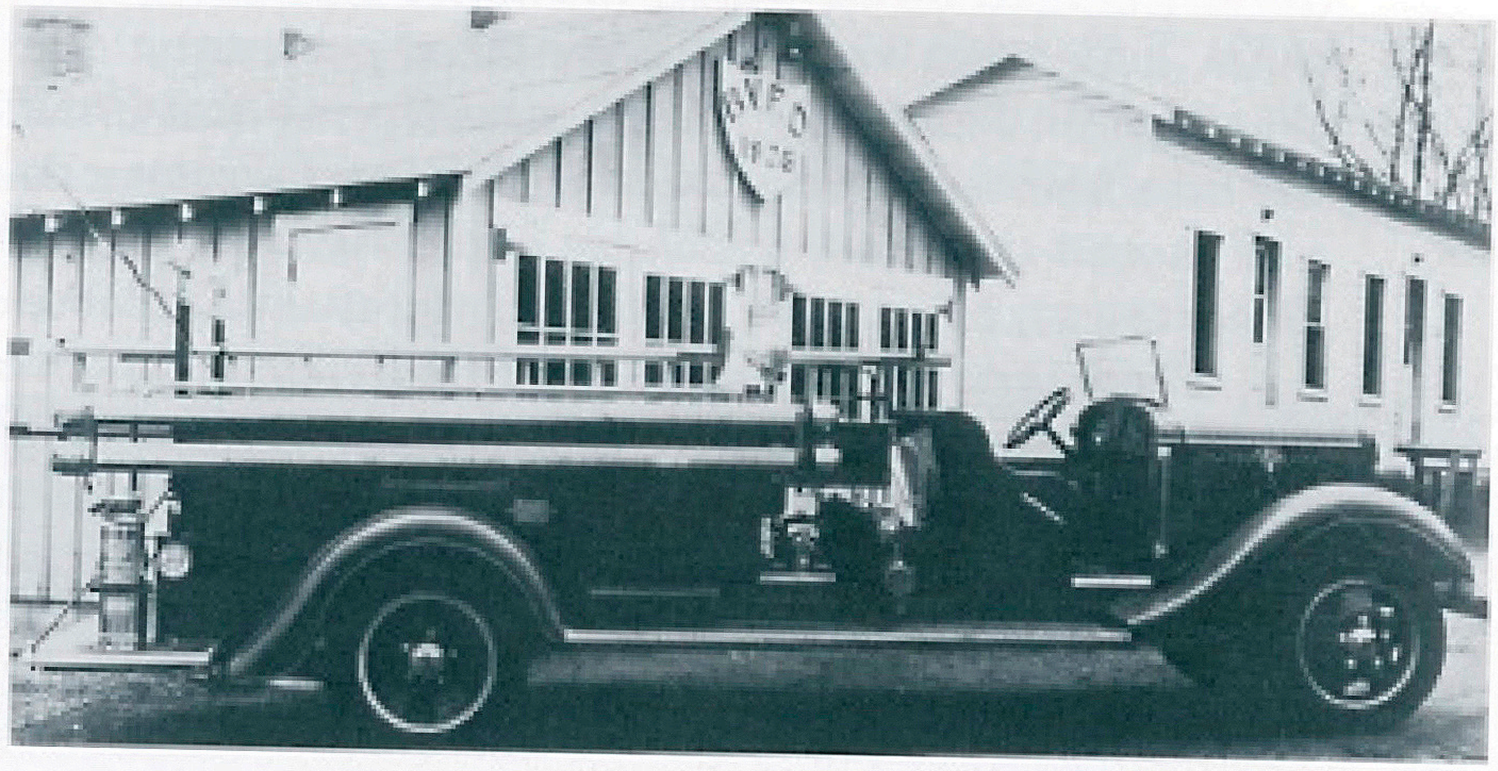
- Hyattsville received bids from American LaFrance and Seagrave for a new pumper. The contract was eventually awarded to American LaFrance for $13,000. This engine became known as the "Red Devil" by the firemen.

- Laurel also bought an American LaFrance pumper. This unit is still owned by the fire company.
- Boulevard Heights bought a Ford chassis and the members converted it into a fire engine. They mounted a 150 g.p.m. pump, 100 gallon booster tank and 300 feet of hose.
- Marlboro placed in service a Buffalo Chemical Wagon.

Fire Prevention:

- Greater Capitol Heights reported they responded on 51 alarms during 1928. This included 20 house fires, 16 brush fires, 5 business property fires, 8 auto fires, 1 bridge and 1 assisted rescue squad. Fire loss for the year totaled $107,572.00.

Bowie Volunteer Fire Department



Bowie existed as a very small rural community since the mid 1800's with approximately 500 citizens. There were several general stores, shops, livery stables, hotels and saloons in the town. The first major fire occurred in 1910. Losses included three hotels, three general stores, four saloons, one livery stable, several buildings owned by the railroad and a few homes. The fire had burned out of control since there was no fire protection available.

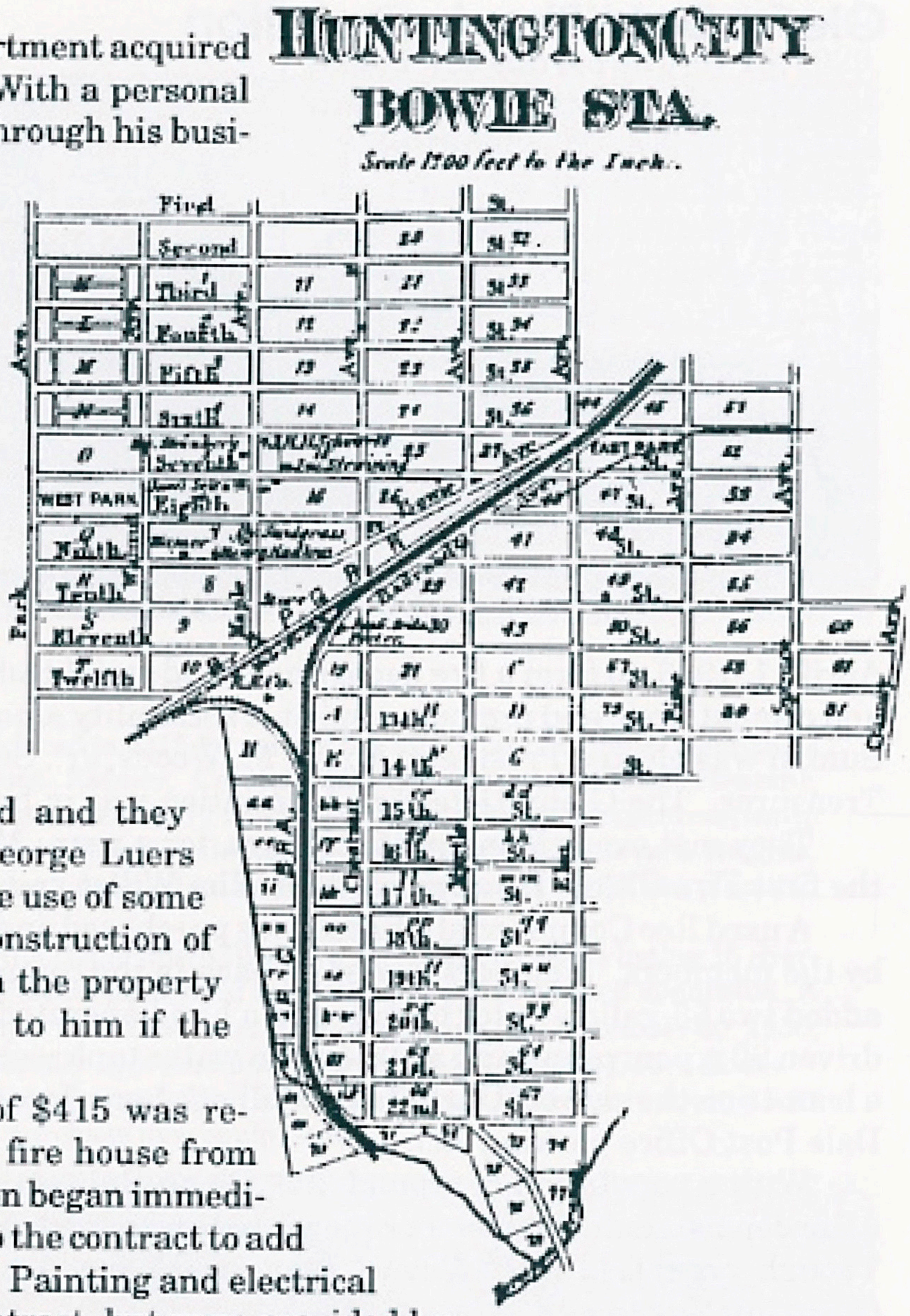
Old timers remember there having once been a bucket brigade of sorts. The equipment was apparently kept at Ruptkys Blacksmith Shop. The early effort was never formally organized and no official records exist.

A second major fire occurred at the Bowie RaceTrack in 1927. These two events caused interested citizens to form a fire department. Following a series of articles in the Bowie Register, a meeting was held at the Bowie High School on January 24, 1928. The meeting was called to order by Mr. William Everett. Mr Knauer, the local Forest Warden, spoke of the need for a local fire department. Mr. C. L. Hughes, a Trustee of the Branchville Volunteer Fire Department, spoke on financing arrangements. Residents attending the first meeting were: Hohn Cowan, Noah Joffe, Aaron Horwitz, Bernard Luers, John Luers, Richard Luers, Ruben Joffe, David McClelland, Truitt McClelland, John Bauman, William C. Kreitzer, Robert Showaiter, Joseph Kline, Jr., Lane Seitz, James Wildman, Sr., and Noah Wright.

At the meeting, on the motion of John Cowan, seconded by J. E. Burroughs, Mr. Joffe was elected the first Chief of the new department. Mr. Aaron Horwitz was elected Assistant Chief and Mr. Bernard Luers was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

Mr. W. L. Trott, Sr., was later asked to serve as President of the organization. Membership started to increase while committees drafted the first Constitution and By-Laws. Others, studied means of acquiring fire equipment and building the first fire station. It was determined, at the first several meetings, the Department would not be connected with the town government or any other government agency. It was also determined no tax monies would be solicited or used, rather funds would be raised through volunteer contributions and events like dinners, plays, carnivals, and other community functions.

In just two months, the Department acquired its first firefighting equipment. With a personal loan from Chief Noah Joffe, and through his business dealings with the Cherrydale (Virginia) Volunteer Fire Department, along with Mr. William Kreitzer and Assistant Chief Everett, two Ford Model "T" Chemical Fire Trucks were purchased for a total of $625. This equipment was placed in service immediately and housed in Mr. Kreitzer's Bowie Motor Company auto repair garage on 9th Street.



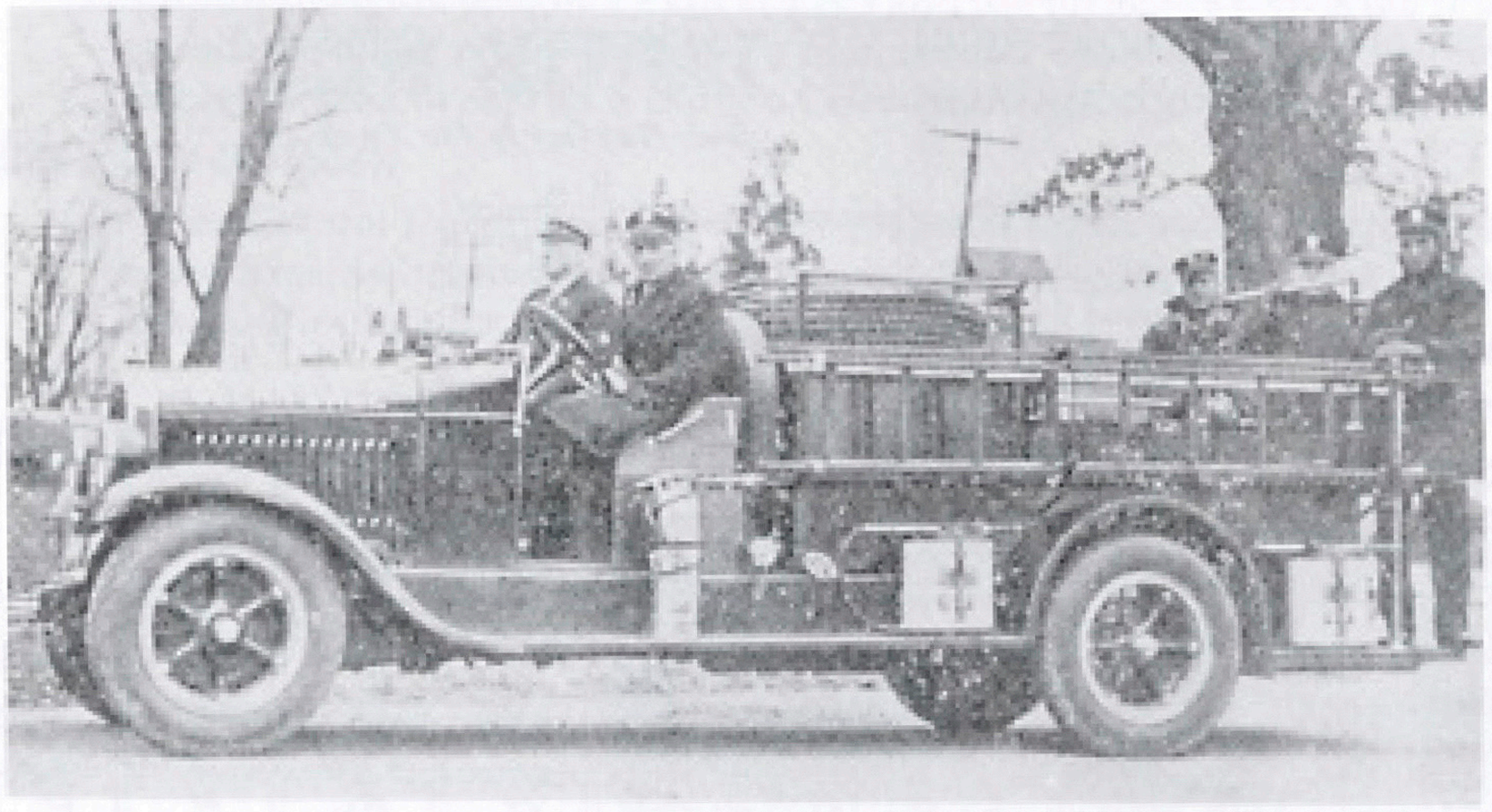
With the purchase of the trucks, a permanent fire station became the important issue facing the company. In October 1928, a Search Committee was formed and they quickly found a location. Mr. George Luers agreed to give the Department free use of some land on Chapel Avenue for the construction of the firehouse under the condition the property would automatically revert back to him if the Fire Department ceased to use it.

The next month, a low bid of $415 was received for the construction of the fire house from Mr. Charles Fladung. Construction began immediately. An amendment was made to the contract to add a side door, adding $8 to the cost. Painting and electrical work were not included in the contract, but were provided by the members on a voluntary basis. Heating was provided by a pot belly stove donated by Mr. Jacob Berlin. The first firehouse was finished and dedicated on December 17, 1928.

Mr. Nova donated the department's first membership badges. Chief Joffe and other members loaned money and other items to the department to get it started. A First Aid Unit was formed within the department, headed by Captain Truitt McClelland along with 20 men. A visit by Chief Leonard of the Rescue Squad, Chief William C. Tierney of the Greater Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department and Chief William Smith of Boulevard Heights Volunteer Fire Department started this interest in first aid and rescue work.

The new department closed its books for the year debt free. The new firehouse and fire trucks were paid in full. During the first year, several fires occurred. One, a house on Ducketsville Road, across from the Lutheran Church, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Campbell, was totally destroyed by fire. The loss was due to the limited capacity of the Chemical Trucks. This fire brought about actions to acquire additional fire engines, which would have the capacity to carry both water and pump.[62]

Glenn Dale Fire Association



Fires set by sparks from steam locomotives, lighting and faulty chimneys were frequent in the area. Churches and other fraternal organizations provided various activities, but no group attracted all members of the community. Mr. R. W. Suman, Postmaster, called a meeting at Saint George's Hall on April 11, 1928, to form a fire department and social club. They were organized to prevent and combat fires, and promote a spirit of sociability among the men of the community. Mr. Suman was elected President; Mr. E. M. Woods, Jr., Secretary and Mr. E. M. Woods, Sr., Treasurer. The Glenn Dale Fire Association was in business.

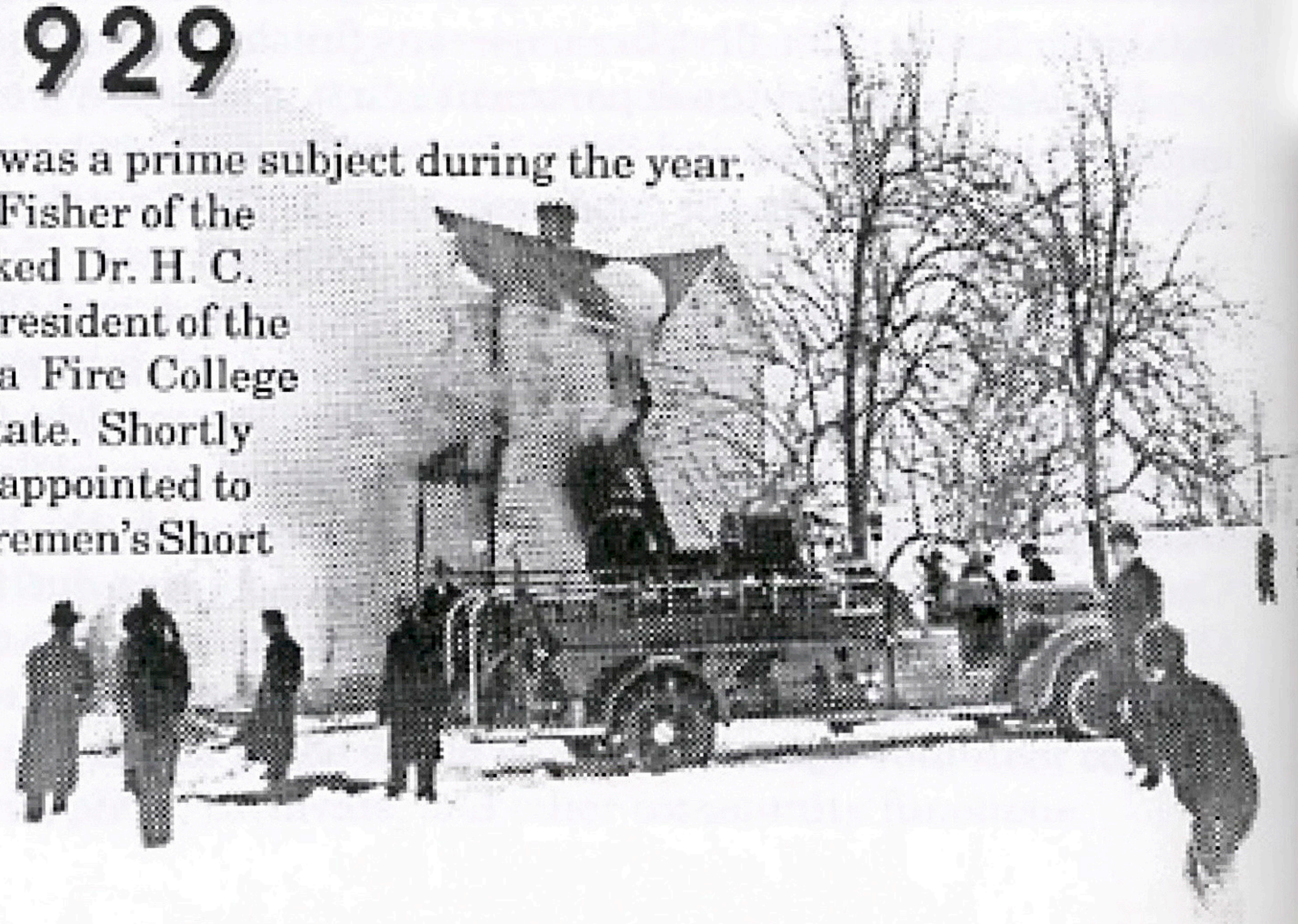
They met every Monday at 8:00 p.m. for a year. Mr. Milton Brickard was elected as the first Fire Chief. He appointed Mr. Jim Willet and Mr. Fred Harvey as Lieutenants.

A used Reo Commercial Chassis was purchased and converted into the first fire engine by the members. Members loaned $5 each to the company to purchase the engine. They added two 55-gallon water barrels and a hand-operated pump. Later, a front-end engine-driven 90 g.p.m. pump and a 100-gallon water tank were added. The engine was stored in a lean-to on the side of "Uncle Jake" Willet's barn (located on the site of the present Glenn Dale Post Office parking lot).

With a population of around 200, Glenn Dale was too small to support and operate a fire department. Yet members persisted and joined the County Association in July 1928. Though organized after Bowie, they joined the Association first and were assigned Company Number 18. [63]

1929

Fire training education was a prime subject during the year. In Annapolis, Chief Jesse A. Fisher of the Annapolis Fire Company asked Dr. H. C. Byrd, then Assistant to the President of the University of Maryland, if a Fire College could be established in the State. Shortly thereafter, a committee was appointed to help with the planning of a Firemen's Short Course for the University.



Laurel Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary was organized on May 6, 1929, at the home of Mrs. Rose Baker, with the help of Mrs. Annie Burnette of Branchville. There were 11 members present for the first meeting. They were: Mrs. Hazel-Beall, Mrs. Minnie Whitmore, Mrs. Ida Timmons, Mrs. Mildred Harrison, Mrs. Emma Fairall, Mrs. Rose Baker, Mrs. Hazel Sartain Kedwell, Mrs. Emma Shipley, Mrs. Gertrude Beall, Mrs. Ella Herberson, and Mrs. Susie Sakers. They met on the first Wednesday of each month at the firehouse. During World War II, this group became the first female firefighters in the Country.

The second Volunteer Rescue Squad was started on July 15, 1929, in Glenn Dale and assigned Rescue Squad Number 2. A first aid class was taken by Mr. Thomas Robine, Gerald Seaton, Jim Willet, Joe Wood and James Woods. These same men also signed a note to borrow the money for the ambulance from the Bank of Bowie. The first ambulance was a used 1927 Dodge, bought in damaged condition, during 1929. Glenn Dale also organized a band with 16 members for parades and other special events.

Association News:

- Appropriations for the year were reduced to $315 for each of the nine Class A pumper companies (Hyattsville, Cottage City, Mount Rainier, Capitol Heights, Riverdale, Seat Pleasant, Bladensburg, Laurel, and Branchville), and $270 for the eight Class B non-pumper companies (Brentwood, College Park, Riverdale Heights, Greater Capitol Heights, Boulevard Heights, Glenn Dale, and Bowie). The amount awarded totaled $4,995, the remaining $5 was placed in reserve for future use.
- On May 27, 1929, the Berwyn Heights Department filed new corporation papers listing 15 charter members. Soon thereafter, members purchased their first piece of motorized apparatus. A 1926 Republic Pumper followed by a 1928 Chevrolet Chemical Truck. On December 30, 1930, the Department's charter was officially approved and recorded at the County Court House.
- Cottage City voters and the State Legislature approved a town fire tax. This extra income was used by the fire company to help purchase new equipment.

New Equipment:

- Branchville bought an American LaFrance 500 g.p.m. Pumper with an 80-gallon booster tank and 1,200 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose for a cost of $6,500. The Suburban Trust Company extended a loan to the company for the purchase.
- Berwyn Heights purchased a used 1926 Republic Pumper followed by a 1928 Chevrolet Chemical Truck.

Communications:

- The C & P Telephone Company agreed to allow its operators to receive calls for assistance and activate the various fire station sirens. The operators would also telephone the volunteers at home to ensure the alarm was answered. The ambulance and fire personnel would telephone the operators at the conclusion of calls to see if additional alarms were pending.
- College Park replaced the old fire bell with a siren on May 29, 1929. However, the phone operator still had to find someone home to sound the siren in case of fire. A phone was installed in December at the station.

New Stations:

- The new firehouse for Glenn Dale was opened on December 2, 1929, on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Suman. There was room for two small fire engines and an ambulance. A small meeting room was located upstairs.

Fire Prevention:

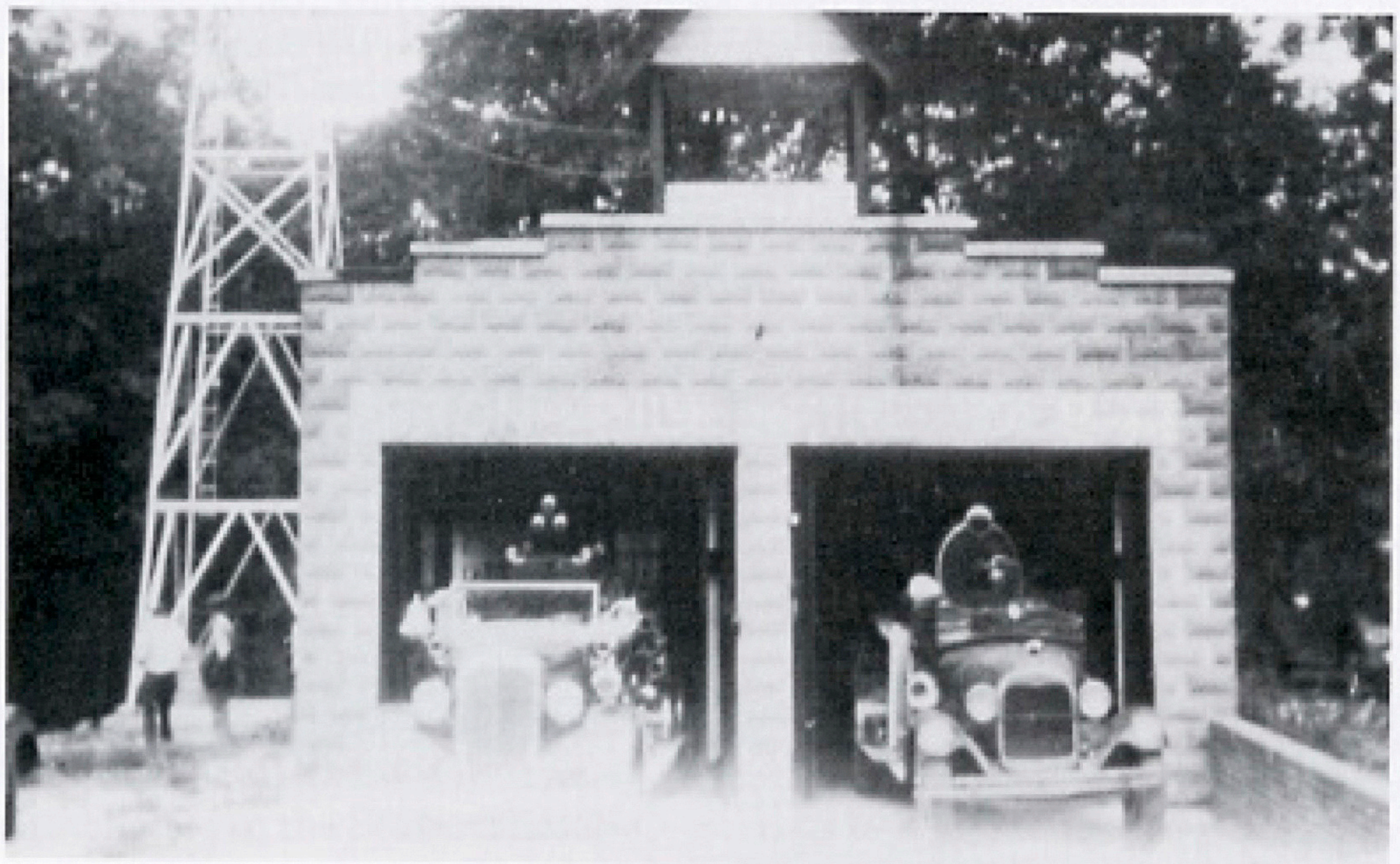
- Greater Capitol Heights Number 2 reported that during the year they responded to 56 alarms. This included 21 house fires, 18 brush fires, 5 auto fires, 3 chicken houses, 2 stores, 3 saw mills, a dance hall, 1 shed, 1 fireworks stand and 1 false alarm. The fire loss for the year was $56,950.[64]

Lanham Fire Department

Little is known about this group. The only mention of them was found in a newspaper article published on December 19, 1929.

> *"Lanham Fire Department was formally organized on December 6, 1929 with H. M. A. Blythe as Chief, Earl Thomas as Assistant Chief, E. E. Pennifield as Secretary and Gustavus Bagelman as Treasurer. One hundred fifty dollars has been paid out toward the fire truck, which is being kept in Blythe's Garage for the present, and there is over $10 in the treasury. Plans for organizing this company has been pending for some months, and the truck was kept in Lanham subject to approval. Sanction of the public was desired by the organizers before making the purchase. After funds were raised by the popular subscription the organization was completed."*[65]

Oxon Hill Volunteer Fire Department



On Tuesday, July 9, 1929, a meeting was held at the Oxon Hill Elementary School to organize a volunteer fire department. Acting as Chairman was George Finger, a Past President of the Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. Finger presented information as to the makeup and workings for such an organization.

The following officers were installed on July 30, 1929: Mr. Millard Thorne, President; Mrs. Charles Janes, Secretary; and Mr. Marcellus Buckler as Fire Chief.

1930

This year saw the hiring of the first paid firefighter in the County by the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department. Over the next 40 years, paid firefighters would grow in numbers and eventually, the Prince George's County Fire Department would be formed.

Harry Wilcoxen was elected to fill the position of paid firemen by members of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department. The local newspaper carried the following report of the historic event.

FIRST FIREMEN GETS PAY

"Hyattsville, October 20, 1930-Years of volunteer fire history precedent were broken recently by the Mayor and Common Council when a member of the local fire company was placed on a salary to insure additional safety to Hyattsville residents.

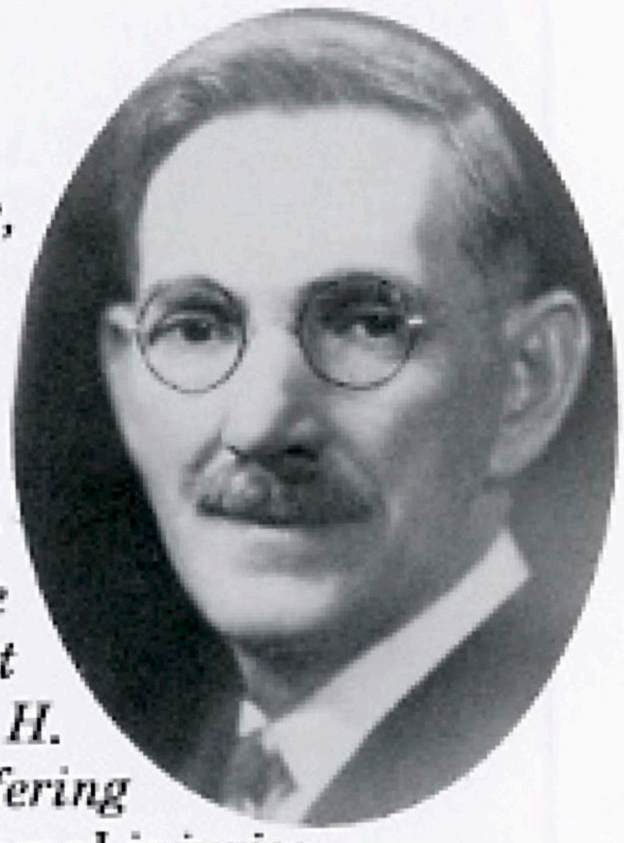
Harry Wilcoxen, for many years a volunteer member of the local fire company, was put in charge of the firehouse and its maintenance on an eight-hour basis for seven days a week by the decision of the Council here Friday night. His salary was $125 a month.

The duties of the newly appointed machinist will consist of driving the fire trucks and maintaining their upkeep. He will have full charge of the firehouse and engines in the absence of Chief John Fainter.

It is the first time in local fire history that a paid man has been placed on the list of the volunteer firemen, and some discussion was raised as to the precedent it might establish. The action of the Mayor and Council came after a request had been received by them from the members of fire company that a paid man be placed in charge of the engine house."[66]

The second major event of the year brought great sadness to the entire Association. On October 25, 1930, Volunteer Captain B. Wesley Cranford was killed instantly, and several other firemen injured, when the fire engine crashed enroute to an alarm. Cranford was the first County Volunteer Fireman killed in the line of duty.

TRUCK'S CRASH KILLS FIREMAN AND INJURES 5



"A Volunteer Fire Captain was instantly killed yesterday, and five of his companions were injured, one seriously, when an Upper Marlboro (MD) fire engine overturned as it was speeding along Ritchie Road, near Forestville, to answer an alarm in Seat Pleasant, Md.

Chief J. E. McCormick, who was at the wheel, swerved the heavy apparatus to avoid collision with a coupe, coming in the opposite direction, and the fire engine turned over twice. Capt B. W. Cranford was thrown out and instantly killed. Walter H. Kerr, another fireman, was taken to Casualty Hospital suffering from a broken right arm, two fractured ribs and possible internal injuries.

The others injured were Chief McCormick, Earl Wibel, Charles Kerr, brother of Walter, and James Risely. They were treated at their homes. The fire engine caught fire after it was upset and was destroyed by the flames."[67]

Association News:

- County funds totaling $15,000 were divided among the 20 eligible member companies.
- After much work, the first Firemen's Short Course was held by the University of Maryland at College Park with over 50 men in attendance. The course was taught by Mr. Herwood Brockwell, Fire Marshal of North Carolina.

New Equipment:

- During the year, Mount Rainier was one of the many fire companies which found the need for newer and improved equipment. To supply needed ladder and salvage equipment, a used American LaFrance City Service Truck with a 50-foot wooden extension ladder was purchased and placed in service.
- Seat Pleasant bought a specialized Mack Light Unit Truck with a 10,000-watt generator.
- Bowie made plans to purchase a new fire engine. A new Ford Fire Truck with a 250-gallon water tank and 350 g.p.m. midship pump was purchased. The equipment was mounted on the Ford Chassis by the Meeks Body Company of Washington, D.C. for a total cost of $1,650. Funds to pay for the new truck, and operational needs were raised through dances, bingos, dinners and fund drives. The County Firemen's Association also started the annual payment of funds to the Department.
- Marlboro purchased a new Seagrave 500 g.p.m. Pumper with a 100-gallon booster tank at a cost of $5,960. Seagrave had just begun installing water booster tanks in place of the earlier chemical tanks. The unit was delivered on August 1, 1930, and formally accepted by the Department seven days later. The initial payment was $1,250, leaving less than $500 in the bank.
- Oxon Hill ordered their first piece of motorized equipment on February 13, 1930. A Ford Model "A" Fire Engine was ordered from Mr. Frank Small of the Annacostia Auto Sales Company at a cost of $1,076.75. It was delivered on April 10, and quickly placed in service.

Communications:

- College Park had a connection made to the station phone so the operators could sound the fire siren, and give the first arriving member the call information.

New Stations:

- Capitol Heights, because of their expanding fleet, built a new firehouse on 61st Avenue. This building today serves as the Town Hall.
- Branchville also found a need for more room in the firehouse. The company obtained the lot adjacent to the firehouse from the Community Club of Berwyn. An old portable school building was also obtained. It was rebuilt and enlarged into a meeting hall at a cost of $3,500. The property was conveyed to the company for the sum of $1 on June 30, 1930.[67]

Prince George's County Ladies Auxiliary

On May 23, 1930, at the Branchville firehouse, Annie Burnett, President of the Branchville Ladies Auxiliary, invited members from the other auxiliaries in the County to join in organizing a County Auxiliary. The following officers were elected: Annie Burnett, President; Ethel Baker, Vice-President; Ida Timmons, Secretary; and Irene Connor, Treasurer.

After the first meeting, Ethel Baker was taken ill and resigned. Genevieve Stewart of Riverdale Heights was elected to fill the office. During the first year, Ida Timmons also resigned as Secretary. This vacancy was filled with the election of Anna Seymour of Mount Rainier.

Nine Auxiliaries were charter members of the organization. They were: Berwyn Heights, Boulevard Heights, Branchville, Capitol Heights, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Rainier, Riverdale Heights and Greater Capitol Heights.

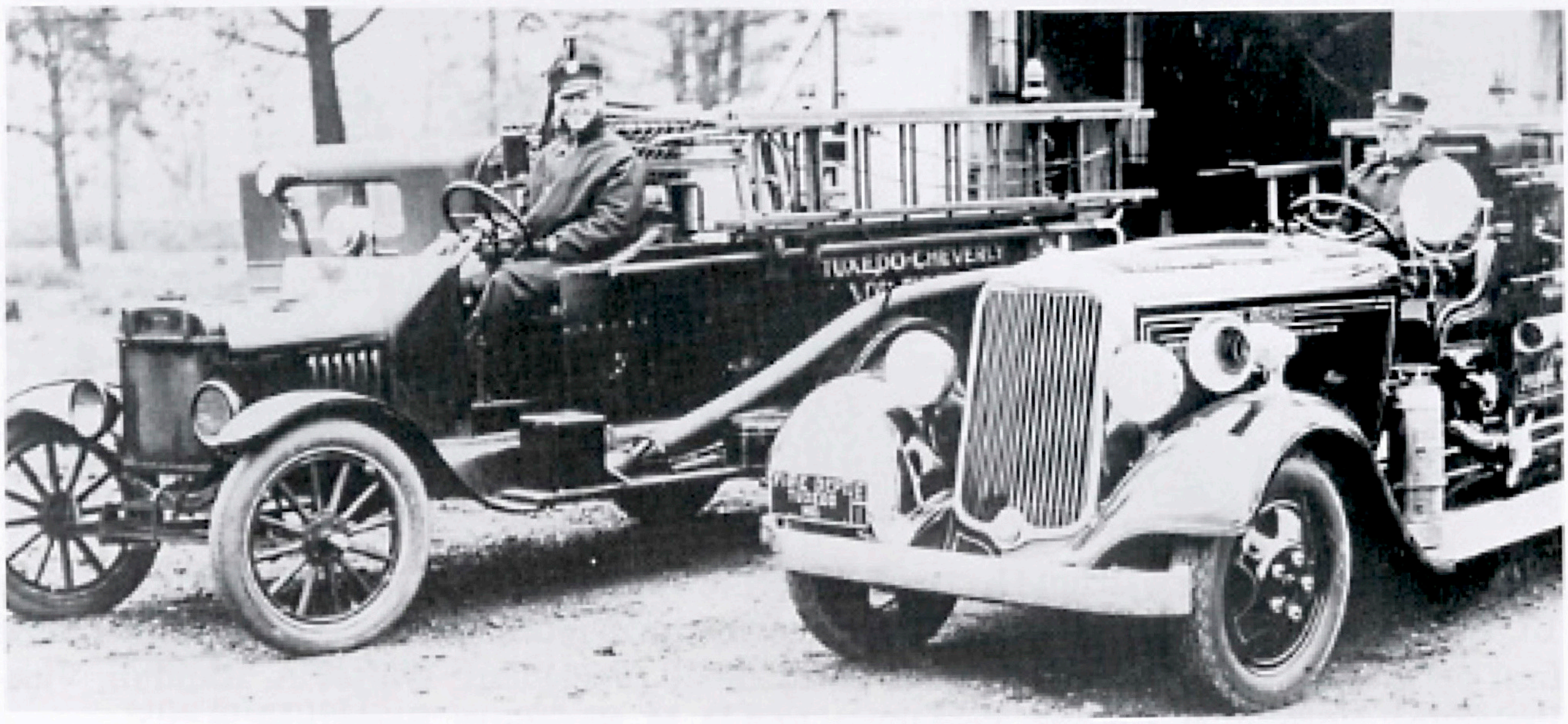
In August, the ladies attended their first convention. A float was designed and entered into the parade. They won a five dollar gold piece. It was decided, during the month, that dues would be $3 per year for member auxiliaries.

Their goal was to assist the firefighters at emergency scenes and in fund-raising activities. One of the first donations was to the Rescue Squad Association for the purchase of ambulance equipment.[68]

Fire Prevention:

•Greater Capitol Heights Number 2 reported they responded to 15 alarms during the first six months of the year. This included one mutual aid call to Engine Company 19 of the District Fire Department. Fire loss totaled over $153,175. [70]

Tuxedo-Cheverly Volunteer Fire Department



This group was started during the year by citizens interested in fire protection for their community. Mr. Lester G. Berry was elected as the first Fire Chief.

Forestville Volunteer Fire Department

On December 18, 1930, a group of men, most of whom belonged to the State Forestry Crew, met at Woodman Hall in Forestville to begin the organization of their own fire department. Sixteen men attended, plus three Fire Chiefs from surrounding fire companies. Most of the meeting was devoted to discussion of ways to organize a fire department.[71]

1931

There were now 20 volunteer companies in the Association. Of those, 13 were classified as pumper and seven as non-pumper companies. The Association worked hard to establish the minimum amounts and types of equipment that each piece of firefighting equipment should carry.

A second meeting was held by the Forestville Volunteer Fire Department on January 13, 1931. State Forester Winslow presided over the meeting and 21 men attended. The first permanent officers elected were: R. K. Small, President; Walter A. Randall, Vice-President; Norman H. Collins, Treasurer; and D. M. Sansbury, Secretary.

Association News:

- County payments to the volunteers were increased from $5,000 to $15,000 per year.
- Rules were also adopted to set standard specifications for the minimum types of equipment required for fire companies to carry on apparatus.
- Two members from the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Company, Harry Wilcoxen and Ernest Davis, traveled to the District of Columbia Fire Training Academy to attend school. After completing the training, they began teaching the course to members of Hyattsville on Friday evenings.

New Equipment:

- Cottage City satisfied their needs for a ladder truck with the purchase during the year of a new Seagrave City Service Ladder Truck.
- Riverdale increased their fleet with the purchase of a new Buffalo 500 g.p.m. Pumper. Funds for the equipment were raised through a special 10-cent tax passed by the State General Assembly.
- Branchville converted a Chrysler Roadster into a Chief's car.
- Glenn Dale purchased a used Hudson to replace the original Dodge Ambulance and a used White Commercial Truck Chassis. Members added a 200-gallon booster tank and a 200 g.p.m. take-off pump to convert the truck into a fire engine.

New Stations:

- Forestville appointed a committee to look into the cost of building a firehouse on a donated 50-foot by 100-foot piece of property. At the next meeting it was decided to construct a 24-foot by 30-foot building for a cost of $850. Donated material and labor helped defray the cost of construction.

Bladensburg Ladies Auxiliary

This group was organized in November 1931, with 23 charter members. They raised funds through bingos, dinners, bake sales, and raffles. This money was used to equip the firehouse kitchen and purchase equipment for the firemen. They own and operated a 1937 Buffalo at various parades and events.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR FIRE APPARATUS

Adopted by the Legislative Committee on Jan. 18, 1931, at Bladensburg, Md.

CLASS A. PUMPER

Pump of at least 250 gallon capacity, manufacturers rating
500 feet 2 1/2 inch hose
One 10 foot suction hose
150 feet 3/4 or one inch chemical or booster hose and nozzle
One 18 foot extension ladder
One axe, one pike pole, one crow-bar
Two 2 1/2 inch shut off nozzles
Two 2 1/2 gallon hand extinguishers
Lantern
Warning Signal

CLASS B. AERIAL OR SERVICE TRUCK (HOOK AND LADDER TRUCK)

200 feet of ladders
Two pike poles, tow axes, 2 lanterns, one door opener, one crow-bar
Two tarpaulins at least 12 feet by 12 feet
100 feet rope, at least 5/8 inch
One life belt
One gas mask
One pair high tension pliers
Warning signal

CLASS C. AMBULANCE OR COMBINATION RESCUE SQUAD /AMBULANCE

One standard first aid kit
One stretcher,one cot, assorted splints
One gas mask
One inhalator with two extra tanks of oxygen
Warning signal

CLASS D. NON-PUMPER

One 30 gallon chemical tank or booster tank with 150 feet of 3/4 or one inch hose with nozzle
One 18 foot extension ladder
One axe, one lantern, one pike pole, one crow-bar, one 2 1/2 gallon extinguisher
Warning signal

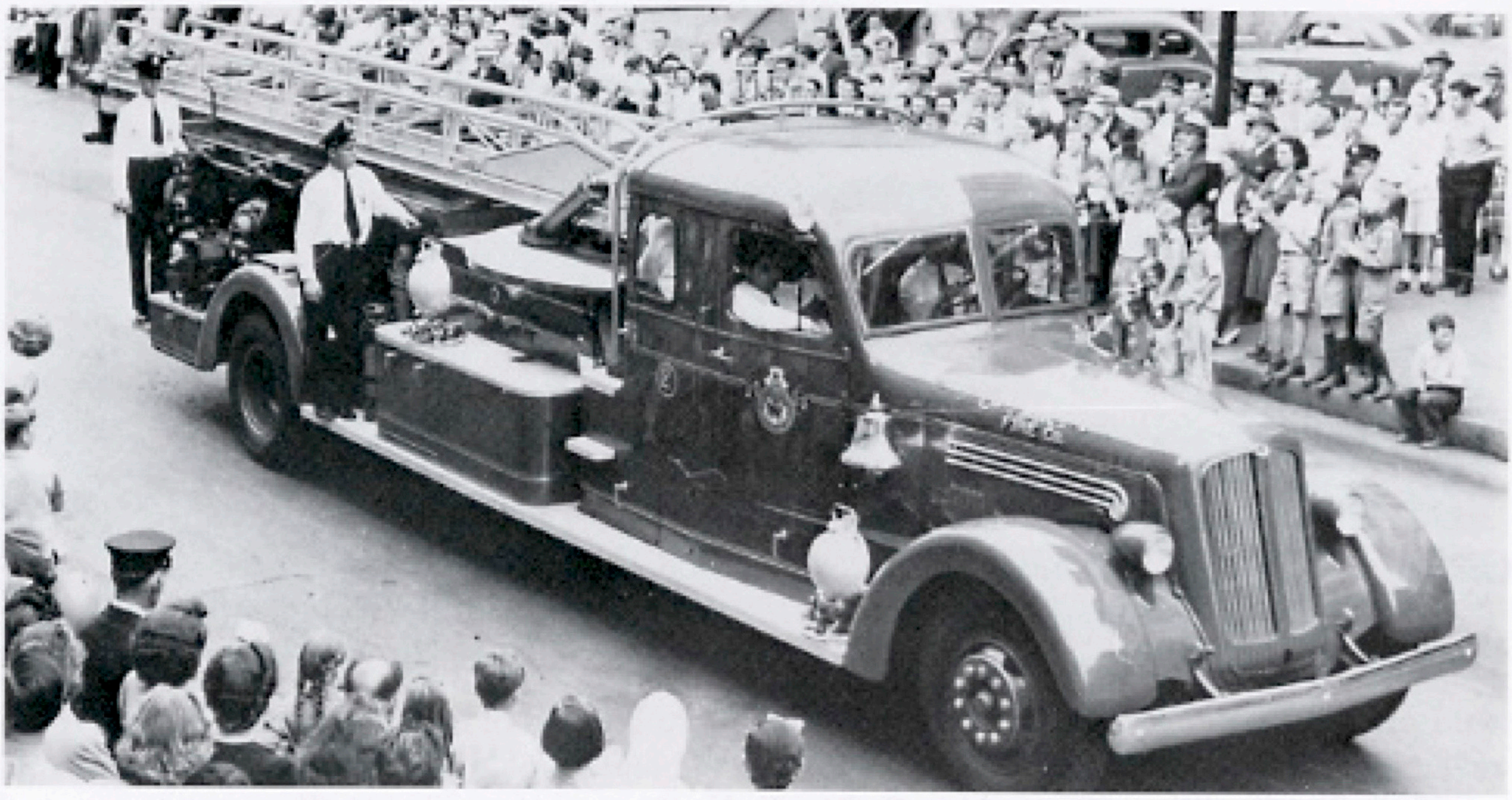
CLASS E. HOSE WAGON

One 18 foot extension ladder, one roof ladder
One axe, one pike pole, one lantern, two 2 1/2 inch nozzles, one 2 1/2 gallon extinguisher
500 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose
Warning signal

CLASS F. FOREST FIRE FIGHTER

Four five gallon pressure cans, one back firer, 12 rakes, two axes, two long handled shovels, two short handled shovels, One crosscut saw, two lanterns, six canteens, two mattocks, warning signal [72]

1932



The various fire companies continued to improve their firefighting equipment fleets and increase their levels of professionalism through organized fire training. Reports showed 605 active firemen and 340 reserve firemen responded to over 953 fire calls during the year. Some of these firemen attended a training school on salvage methods taught by the Baltimore Salvage Corps in Hyattsville on March 11, 1932.

Troubles started to mount in Hyattsville between the town and members of the fire department. On May 4, 1932, the fire company responded to a fire at a metal-working plant on Baltimore Boulevard. The volunteers advanced a booster line into the fire to extinguish the blaze. Mayor Gray, who was watching the fire, instructed the pump operator to shut down the pump to save gas. The members of the department rallied around Mr. Wilcoxen and refused to follow the Mayor's request. This lead to increased tensions between the town government and the fire company.[73]

Association News:

- Riverdale's firemen's "drill team" was busy bringing home trophies from various events. They even won the Tri-County championships by winning the County and Open Hookup Contest in 13 and 12 seconds respectively. They won over 16 other companies from the County and surrounding areas. This marked the first time they appeared in the full dress uniforms, which were donated by the Ladies Auxiliary.
- Members of Forestville hosted their first County meeting on April 13, 1932. They joined the Maryland State Firemen's Association in September. However, the membership dues of $13 had to be borrowed.

New Equipment:

- Many companies added new equipment during the year. This included a Light Wagon for Hyattsville, a Brockway Pumper for Laurel, and a used Hahn for Riverdale. This gave the volunteer companies 19 Class A pumpers, 3 hook and ladder service trucks, 14 non-pumper trucks equipped with either chemical or booster tanks, 5 hose wagons, 2 chief's cars, and 1 truck equipped for forest fire service. This brought to 44, the number of available motorized fire engines throughout the County.

- After several Hyattsville firemen had been injured while fighting night fires, Wayne Read suggested the old Cadillac Hose Wagon be converted into a Light and Salvage Unit. At the September meeting the idea was approved and the Light Unit was constructed by the members. The unit responded on its first call on the evening of November 13, 1932, at the home of Mrs. Carroll, Number 4 Cecil Avenue.[74]
- Bladensburg members converted a Ford Chassis into a pumper by mounting a 300 g.p.m. pump on it. The unit was especially designed and equipped for fighting forest fires.

New Stations:

- A cinder block building was constructed by Laurel on Montgomery Street to serve as the new firehouse.

Fire Prevention:

- The first steps in fire prevention were started with the organization of the Fire Inspection Board in 1932. Members of this group assisted local fire marshals in determining the causes of suspicious fires and investigated complaints of unsafe buildings which might constitute fire hazards. Karl A. Young served as the first Chairmen of the Board.[75]

Accokeek Volunteer Fire Department

The Accokeek Volunteer Fire Department was organized in March 1932 under the direction of Mr. G. E. Wilson. A Cadillac automobile was converted into the first servicable fire engine by members of the department. It was housed in a one-stall garage, owned by Mr. Wilson, about 100 yards from the current firehouse on Livingston Road. The first alerting system was a large bell. Mr. Wilson would receive the call for assistance on his partyline telephone and would ring the bell to summon the volunteers.

1933

The Mayor and Council of Hyattsville were still at odds with the Fire Department as the year started. Town Officials charged Chief Rushe with violating several town ordinances. These included: receiving funds from the Volunteer Firemen's Association without any accounting to the town, dismantling fire apparatus without consulting the Mayor or Council, taking fire apparatus outside the town limits without permission, and obligating payment of funds by the town without prior approval.

Chief Rushe attended a meeting of the Common Council on January 9, 1933, to make his annual report. They refused to accept his report until he presented it as the ex-Chief. The town then appointed those it wanted to run the fire company. Appointed were: W. B. Harrison, Acting Chief; Charles Beyer, Acting Assistant Chief; and Harry Wilcoxen as Custodian of Machinery.

A resolution was presented by Councilman Anderson on January 23, 1933, to try and address the issues facing the Town and Fire Department. Some members of the Fire Department and citizens, believed the Mayor and Council were engaged in a head hunt. Both sides refused to budge. The volunteers locked themselves in the fire house and refused to exit. They were supplied with contributions of food, tobacco and games from various sources.

Meanwhile, the town began legal proceedings against the Fire Department. This included the appointment of 22 new volunteers picked by the Mayor and Common Council to operate the fire equipment. The *Hyattsville Independent* carried several stories reporting about the ongoing turmoil.

HYATTSVILLE FIRE OUSTER IN COURT

"The Mayor and Common Council of Hyattsville on Tuesday, took into court its' fight to oust members of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., from possession of the firehouse and equipment, and to compel an accounting of money spent during the past year by the firemen." [76]

NAMED AS DEFENDANTS

"The Fire Department was ordered disbanded, by the Council, a month ago. A new department was appointed, but the members of the old force have steadfastly refused to give up possession (of the Municipal Building and fire apparatus) and have continued to answer alarms." [77]

Further problems were raised when Mr. V. A. Simmel, Treasurer of the Volunteer Firemen's Association, refused to pay funds to the Mayor and Common Council. Simmel said the County paid the money to the Association under a 1931 Legislative Act, which required him to only turn the funds over to the Treasurer's of fire companies and rescue squads. Meanwhile, the firemen were gathering strength in their battle. A petition was signed by over 150 citizens backing the fire department. A *Baltimore Post* article in January 1933, described the growing conflict.

FIREMEN GETTING ALONG GREAT BARRICADED IN ENGINE HOUSE

"Entrenched in the local firehouse, from which they have refused to let the Mayor, the Town Council or the Chief of Police oust them, 40 members of the deposed Volunteer Fire Department continued today to hold the fire station against new men appointed to their places.

Meanwhile, the barricaded firemen are whiling away the time, playing checkers, poker and dominoes. Some of the 'high hat boys' get off by themselves for a game of bridge. A radio in the building is 'tuned in' continually, and some of the men even join in the singing programs.

A big coffee urn has been borrowed, a fire kept burning in the stove and provisions sufficient to last for a considerable time were procured. In addition, the men are purchasing delicacies from a pastries shop in the neighborhood, deliveries being made by a delivery boy who passes the cakes and pies through a window opened for that purpose.

The 'oldsters' are not allowing themselves to be permanently besieged, for they take turns visiting their homes. Chief Noble F. Rushe, however, insists on a squad of ten men remaining in the building at all times.

The barricaded firemen sent out word today that they are 'getting along great' in their impromptu barracks, and again warned Hyattsville residents to be careful not to let a fire start, intimating that there might be trouble if it did." [78]

In the end, the Fire Department won their battle with the Mayor and Common Council. The court sided with the volunteers. With the case behind them, the volunteers moved on. Flood waters raged through Hyattsville and surrounding areas on August 23, 1933. The Light and Salvage Unit was dispatched the next day to a train wreck on the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks over the Eastern Branch. The unit was used for seven days on the scene. This incident proved the need for factory built light and salvage unit.

Chief Rushe discovered the Peter Pirsch Company had a Smoke Ejector and Booster Truck available at the factory for $8,000. The Department purchased the unit and added a light plant in place of the booster pump for $250. This unit was the first such unit on the East coast. Payments were arranged for $500 down, with yearly payments of $500.

The unit operated through a series of tubes and a suction tank. Smoke could be drawn by the unit from a burning building, enabling firemen to gain entrance without the use of a mask.

On November 5, 1933, the unit responded to its first call at the home of W. T. Atkinson. A stove had overheated and set the partitions on fire. The unit was placed in service and quickly pulled the smoke from the house.

It was again used on February 4, 1934, during a fire at 122-124 Maryland Avenue. Cottage City was the first local fire company to request the assistance of the unit. On July 2, 1934, they responded to a store fire and found the building full of smoke. The Smoke Ejector was dispatched and it quickly rid the building of smoke and fumes.

The District of Columbia Fire Department also used the unit on several occasions. It was first used to fight a fire at the Chastleton Hotel at 16th and R Streets. District firemen had been collapsing from heavy smoke being produced from the burning awnings and other furnishings in the basement. The Hyattsville volunteers took the rear position in the alley behind the Hotel. They opened a basement window and placed the ejector's large suction hose in the frame. The smoke ejector was turned on and the smoke and fumes soon filled the alley, enabling the District firemen to enter the smoke-free hotel and extinguish the fire. It was also used during the five-alarm fire at the Harris Jewelry Company on 11th and F Streets, Northwest. [79]

New Equipment:

- Glenn Dale purchased their first new truck chassis during the year. It was a 1933 Dodge, 2-ton long wheelbase chassis, with 300-gallon booster tank, a 200 g.p.m. pump, and two 3/4" booster lines.

Communications:

- Hyattsville had the old bell line, which was installed in 3 drivers homes extended to 20 homes. Alarm boxes were also installed in the three area schools and connected to the firehouse.
- Dispatching in the Forestville area was difficult at its best during the early 1930's. At the time, Chief David Randall lived in a large house next to the firehouse. In those days, the only telephone service in the area was on a rural party line. The firehouse and Chief Randall were on the same party line. If there was an emergency, residents would call the firehouse. When the ringing was heard in the Randall home, Mrs. Randall would answer the phone. After obtaining the necessary information, she would run across the field to the firehouse and activate the siren. She would then wait at the station for members to arrive and inform them of the location and nature of the call. In later years, the system was modernized with a siren switch installed at the Randall home.[80]

1934

The major issue of importance during the year revolved around the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department. Portions of Takoma Park were located in both Montgomery and Prince George's County. However, the fire department's station was located in Montgomery County. This precluded them from receiving any money from the Prince George's County Government or Volunteer Firemen's Association.

After having fought several fires in the section of Takoma Park located in Prince George's County, the fire department felt they were eligible for funds. In a letter to the Prince George's County Commissioners, dated March 24, 1934, Mr. H. C. Heffner, the President of Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, outlined some of the companies concerns.

> *"The Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department has served and stands ready to serve that section of Prince George's County, in the Corporate limits of Takoma Park and adjacent thereto, roughly bounded by Eastern Avenue, and Riggs Mill Road, containing five square miles, 414 houses, one school, one power house, two gas stations, 1,749 population and assessed property valuation of $1,469.*
>
> *We are compelled to ask a place in your Budget due to the increased number of fires and cost of equipment. Recently, we sustained a fire hose loss of $150 at fire in Prince George's County, outside the town limits."*[81]

A second letter was sent on April 12, 1934, also to the Prince George's County Commissioners.

> *"By a vote of an open meeting of the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, Takoma Park, Maryland, I am writing to inform you that three fires have occurred in the Prince George's County area, in or near that*

town, to which the department responded and for which we receive no benefit from either the County or the Firemen's Association during the period from March 28, April 11, 1934.

The Fires are as follows:

April 2, Brush fire at 325 Elm Avenue.
Two pieces of equipment, 10 men, booster hose used.
April 3, Town Dump, Town of Takoma Park.
One piece of equipment, six men, booster hose used.
April 9, Town Dump, Town of Takoma Park.
One Piece of equipment, nine men, booster hose used.

The department is endeavoring to reach an understanding with the Town in regard to fires at the dump. There have been several calls and frequently the department has been told not to put the fire out by a member of the Town Administration."[82]

The response back was not encouraging to the fire department. The County Commissioners said only the Volunteer Firemen's Association could distribute funds to member companies; and since Takoma Park was not a member company, they were not entitled to any funds. A letter was also sent from the Volunteer Firemen's Association to the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department.

"I am in receipt of your letter of April 12 reporting three fires attended by your company in the adjoining Prince George's area. This matter will be laid before the next regular meeting of the Association to be held Wednesday evening, May 9, at the College Park firehouse.

We fully recognize the situation confronting your department and assure you that your loyal cooperation is appreciated. We also have a similar problem, Laurel, for example, adjacent to the Howard County and Anne Arundel lines, and the four companies just outside the District line in the Capitol Heights-Seat Pleasant area. There is no question that there should be some cooperative plan to assist all borderline companies. Unfortunately, the laws which levy and collect taxes in one County for the support of the fire departments do not authorize allotments to companies outside the taxing area, that is, in other Counties.

In this connection, I may add that our Association receives a lump sum appropriation annually of only $13,000 from the County for distribution among the 22 member companies and Rescue Squad, an average of less than $600 per company. This is actually less in some instances than the towns in which the companies are located pay back to the County for fire protection. Moreover, several of our borderline companies have no other regular source of income, being unincorporated jurisdictions and, therefore, without local levies for Department funds...." [83]

Association News:

•The records of the Statistical Committee showed the fire companies responded to 972 fire calls and 629 squad calls. There were 53 pieces of motorized fire equipment in the County, manned by over 830 active volunteer firemen.

New Equipment:

•Boulevard Heights purchased its first factory built fire engine from Peter Pirsch Fire Equipment Company in 1934. The unit was a Diamond "T" Chassis with a 350-G.P.M. pump.

•Members of the Glenn Dale Rescue Squad purchased a second used Hudson Ambulance for use by the squad.

•By 1934, members of the Bowie Volunteer Fire Department had finalized plans to replace the old Ford Model "T"s." An order was placed with the American LaFrance Company for the new pumper at a cost of $3,275. This equipment was mounted on a Ford Truck Chassis acquired through the Bowie Motor Company. The unit was equipped with a windshield to protect the officer and driver.

•During 1934, the Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department started a rescue unit headed by D. S. Herzog. A metal unsinkable lifeboat was purchased and mounted on a running carriage. It was pulled to rescue calls by the fire engine when it was needed. The members also undertook another rebuilding project.[84] This time, the members dismantled the old Buffalo-Ford Pumper and the Hudson Chemical-Hose Truck and built a combination light truck. This new unit was finished and placed in service the following year.

Communications:

•The Capitol Heights Ladies Auxiliary purchased a new siren, which was installed on the firehouse roof to alert members of fire alarms. It replaced the old bell system which had proven inadequate, as more homes were built farther from the center of town. It was sounded for the first time on December 20, 1934, by Mrs. Magaline Schmidt.

New Stations:

•As a partial and temporary solution, the Bowie Volunteer Fire Department rented a horse stable and barn, located adjacent to the firehouse, from Luers Brothers Grocery Store, and kept the two Ford Model "T"s" in it.

1935

Few new developments happened to the fire service in the County during the year. Several companies purchased new equipment while others constructed new firehouses.

Association News:

•The County contribution to the volunteers was increased from $13,500 to $16,000. It was distributed as follows: To the three rescue squad units maintaining ambulances (Bladensburg, Glenn Dale and Marlboro), $500 each; to the four non-pumper companies (Bowie, Glenn Dale, Oxon Hill, and Accokeek), $600 each; and to the 18 pumper companies, $700 each.

•The 6th Annual Short Course for firemen was held on September 3rd, 4th, and 5th, at the University of Maryland. Chief Dougherty of the New York City Fire Department was the featured speaker during the training session.

New Equipment:

- Mount Rainier purchased a new Seagrave 750-g.p.m. pumper. Capitol Heights and Bowie both placed in service new Ford pumpers with 250-gallon water tanks and 350-g.p.m. midship pumps. The Bowie unit cost $1,650 and was delivered by the Meeks Body Company of Washington, D.C.
- Riverdale Heights purchased a new International Chassis and bought a used pump and truck body from the Silver Spring Fire Department. The members combined the two units together and placed the unit in service.
- With the two Hudson Ambulances getting old, the Glenn Dale Rescue Squad bought a new Buick and equipped it with the latest equipment. This included a rubber mattress, heater, and a fan. A short wave radio receiver was also installed so the squad could receive calls while on the road. The unit began standing by for races at the Bowie Race Track.

New Stations:

- Riverdale members proceeded to enlarge the firehouse with the addition of a second floor, council chambers, showers, kitchen and other facilities. The remodeling project took two years to complete.
- Accokeek built its first permanent firehouse with a two-horsepower siren alerting system.

Beltsville Agriculture Center Fire Department

The Beltsville Agriculture Center Fire Department was started by government workers on the farm. Some of the charter members were: Arthur Klein, George Beers, Woodrow Conley, Bert Taylor and Sam Bell. Their first fire engine was a 1935 Ford Model "A" Pumper. The unit was stored in a garage in the mechanical shop area. Members had little or no formal fire training, and no firefighting equipment. One of the members would rush to the shop and respond to the reported fire, while the others went to the scene and fought the fire with hand extinguishers.[85]

1936

The 14th Annual Convention was hosted by the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department on August 7 and 8, 1936. There were no new fire companies admitted into membership. The Greenbelt Public Safety Fire Department was started. This federal fire department was the first station in the County to have a fully paid fire crew on duty.

Association News:

- Harry Wilcoxen, Hyattsville's paid firefighter, had his salary doubled from $1,500 per year to $3,000 per year. This was his first pay raise in six years.[86]

New Equipment:

- Oxon Hill purchased a Reo with Buffalo equipment for $3,787.

Communications:

- A new fire alarm desk was installed by Hyattsville in the firehouse. Two circuits were on the system and they were arranged so either could be tested or used independently. Over 30,000 feet of wire connected the lines to 19 homes.[87]

New Stations:

- After much discussion, site searching and deliberating, Bowie bought a lot from Mr. Issac Kimmel on 9th Street for $700. Funds were now needed to build the new firehouse. It would take two years before work would begin on the project.

Fire Prevention:

- Hyattsville enacted a Fire Prevention Code which required oil burners and heaters be installed according to regulations set by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Other sections of the Code allowed the Town Fire Marshal to enter commercial or multi-family residential properties for inspections. [88]
- The Association reported during the past year, 647 out of the 863 fires were reported as cause unknown. It was also reported there were no arrests by the State Forester or Police in 21 incendiary fires.

Hillside Volunteer Fire Department

The Greater Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department changed its charter and name after the local residents changed the area name to Hillside. The group requested the former Sydney number to be reassigned, as the Hillside group was covering the same area as the former fire company. The Association did so and the Number 15 has not been reassigned since.[89]

Clinton Volunteer Fire Department

A meeting was held by 15 local citizens on December 28, 1936, to organize the Clinton Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. Hugh Bickford, a local attorney, presided with Mr. Alan Penn, acting as Secretary. Nominations were held and the following elected as officers: Harry F. Bradley, President; T. S. Gwynn, Sr., Vice President; J. Frank Dent, Treasurer; Wm. S. Pyles, Secretary. A By-Laws and Membership Committee was appointed.[90]

Greenbelt Public Safety Fire Department

The Fire Department was originally set up under the Director of Public Safety by the Farm Security Administration. A 1936 Ford, 500 g.p.m. Pumper was supplied by the federal government for use in the Greenbelt housing project. It was first kept in an old barn until a permanent structure could be built. Noble V. Rush was the Department's first paid Fire Chief. He had two-man platoons on eight-hour shifts. Extra help was turned out from the Police Force by the sound of the fire siren on Research Road.[91]

1937

The 15th Annual Convention was hosted by Cottage City in 1937. Membership in the Association increased by one with the admission of Clinton during the year. They were assigned Company Number 25.

The first paid fireman in Hyattsville, Harry Wilcoxen, resigned from his job on May 10, 1937, and Mr. Ernest Davis was hired as his replacement.

New Equipment:

- Bladensburg replaced part of their fleet during the year with purchases of a new Packard Ambulance and a Buffalo Pumper. The pumper is still owned by the company today. Bladensburg placed two ambulances in service because of the increasing demands for assistance.
- Branchville bought a Diamond "T" Pumper with a 300-gallon booster tank and 250-g.p.m. pump.
- By January 25, 1937, the Clinton Volunteer Fire Department had $348 in the treasury. Though not enough to buy a new fire engine, they purchased a used engine from the American LaFrance Fire Equipment Company for $1,500 on credit.

Communications:

- The first and only town-wide fire alarm box system was installed in Greenbelt during 1937. This Gamewell System would be the only one ever installed in the County.

New Stations:

- Members of Brentwood were busy expanding their station during the year. A joint committee of the Mayor and Council with the company was appointed to draw the plans for the new building. A bill was passed and approved by the town voters authorizing money to be borrowed for the construction. The new firehouse was completed in 1937 with no increase in taxes for town residents.
- An additional $1,000 was borrowed by the Clinton Volunteer Fire Department to finance the construction of their first firehouse. The building was completed within two months.

Fire Prevention:

- Residents of Glenn Dale installed their first fire plug on the large well at Uncle Jake's store. It had a 2 1/2" connection on it for the pumpers to hook into.

1938

The most important event during the year was the appointment of Professor R. B. Criswell as full time instructor at the Fire Extension Service, College of Engineering, University of Maryland. During January, a 20-week instruction course in fire training was started. Thirty-one volunteer firemen completed the course.

Association News:

- The second paid fireman in the County was hired during 1938 by the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department. James Mezzanotte was hired as a driver during daylight hours. It had become increasingly difficult for the department to get a qualified driver between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. It was also reasoned that a driver experienced with the operational functions of the apparatus, would make the job easier.[92]

New Equipment:

- In Brentwood, a used 1927 Nash Hearse-Ambulance was purchased and placed in service by the Rescue Squad.
- Bowie placed its first ambulance in service during the year. A used 1936 Ford delivery van was purchased and donated to the company by 10 of the members. These men paid $2 per month, for two years, to pay the note on the vehicle. They converted it to use as an ambulance by outfitting it with the necessary equipment to meet County standards.

New Stations:

- Members of Bowie finally saw their dreams come true during the year. Through the efforts of the Department, the Town Commissioners, and the Bowie Improvement Association, plans were forwarded to get partial federal funding for the construction of the new firehouse and town hall. During 1938, Public Works Administration Project Number MD-1152F was established. Matching funds were acquired from the Bowie Improvement Association and the Bank of Bowie. Specifications were developed and drawn, at no cost, by Mr. Spencer W. Phelps, a local resident. After many changes in design, to comply with money limitations, a contract was signed for $6,000 with the A. D. Riden Company of Patuxent. Construction on the building started in December and was completed on May 13, 1939.[93]

1939

The 17th Annual Convention was hosted by Marlboro on August 11 and 12, 1939. Reports showed there were 900 active volunteer firemen who responded to over 1,460 calls for assistance. In addition, the four rescue squads responded to over 1,380 calls for help.

Various units from throughout the County battled a large blaze in Marlboro on January, 1939.

Clinton Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary was started on January 28, 1938. Attending the first meeting was Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Penn, Avis Gwynn, Harry Bradley, Ruth Emer, Bertha Pilkington, and Alice O'Hara. Also attending the meeting was Irene O'Conor, past President of the County and Magalene Schmidt, Prince George's County Organizer for the Maryland State Auxiliary.

Meetings were held twice a month in the members homes. The first function of the Auxiliary was a bingo on March 11, 1938, held in the fire hall; a profit of $2.05 was made. With this money, the Auxiliary purchased brooms for the firehouse.

THORPLAND HISTORIC MARYLAND HOUSE BURNS

"Firemen Battle 10 Hours, Carry Water 2 Miles
Fighting Blaze; 3 Injured.

A defective chimney, in which a fire occurred about three years ago, was blamed last night for the blaze that destroyed the Historic Manor House at Thorpland, Prince George's County, Saturday night, after firemen had battled for more than 10 hours to save the mansion.

Assistant Chief Clevie Buck, of the Marlboro Fire Department, said there would be no further investigation. The blaze, which was visible for 10 miles, resulted in the injury of three firemen, although two women confined to the house by illness were easily carried to safety.

The injured firemen are Clarence Selke, 25, of the Mount Rainier Fire Department, who suffered lacerations of the leg; Henry Luther of the Hyattsville department, who was cut over the eye, and George Cooksey, also of Hyattsville, whose head was cut by a falling brick. All returned to their homes following medical treatment.

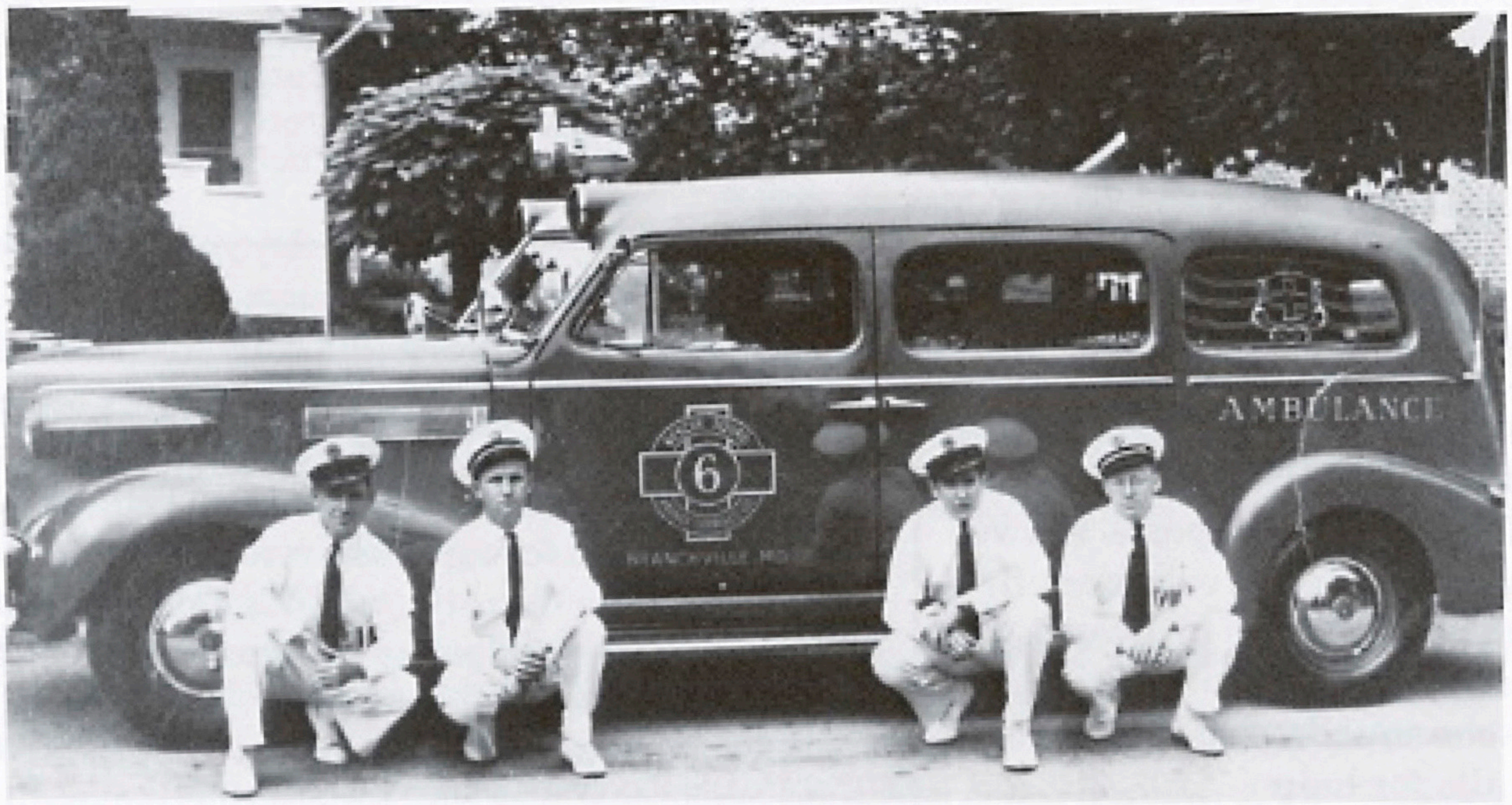
The Marlboro Fire Department arrived when the blaze was starting, but because of water shortage, could not subdue it. A well was pumped dry in ten minutes, and all other water had to be carried 2 miles in trucks from the Pennsylvania Railroad tanks at Marlboro." [94]

Association News;

- The Fire Extension Service suffered a loss with the death of Professor Criswell. Chief Just was soon appointed as his successor.

New Equipment:

- Bladensburg bought two new Buick Ambulances, placing three units in service. With only nine units in the County, it was not uncommon for all of them to be on calls at the same time.



- Another Rescue Squad Unit was started in Branchville. A new LaSalle Ambulance was ordered at a cost of $3,700 with supplies and a radio receiver on the Washington Police Network. This unit covered the territory from Paint Branch on the Baltimore Boulevard, north to Laurel, west to the Montgomery County line, and east to Telegraph Road.

Fire Prevention:

- The issue of fire protection of the District's Glenn Dale Hospital complex was raised during the year. Chief Porter, of the District Fire Department, informed the Glenn Dale Fire Department they could not provide fire protection for the complex.

Glenarden Volunteer Fire Department

Glenarden was one of several black communities starting in the County during the late 1930's. Around 1939, local citizens saw the need for fire protection in their community. With only 25 families in town, it was hard to raise funds to start a fire department. Yet the locals persisted and eventually started to organize.

Citizens gathered for a meeting to organize a fire company. Among the charter members were: Robert Hawkins, Frank Kenner, James R. Cousins, Leroy Hilman, Ager Jackson, Frank Smith, Clarence Johnson, and William Swain.

A used Ford Model "T" Chemical Wagon was purchased as the first fire engine. It was housed in a building at the corner of Brightseat Road and Glenarden Parkway (the current site of the County Library). Members gathered every Wednesday evening for meetings and drills.

Though visited by members of the Association, the company was unable to meet standards required for admittance. After a few years, the group disbanded.[96]

1940

With the outbreak of World War II, the various fire companies began facing growing problems. Available manpower was reduced as members volunteered for military service and there was no new fire equipment available for purchase. During the war, replacement of the most minor equipment was extremely difficult at the best. Gasoline and oil were rationed and in constant need. In an effort to augment the remaining personnel, various solutions were tried. Some companies started Junior Fire Departments, while others started training women to become firefighters.

The women fire fighters in the County were the first in the country to serve as fire fighters. Various publications heralded the unique war time service these women performed. Laurel was one of the departments which trained women as firefighters. Some members of the early crew were: Goldie Hofman, Mabel Grauel, Alma Geis, Evelyn Beall and Catherine Fairall.

LAUREL WOMEN FIGHT FIRES

"Housewives in Laurel are ready to lay down their baking pans, floor mops, or dusting cloths and take up shoulder pumps, ladder and fire hose at the drop of a firemen's hat.

The housewives organized a firefighting auxiliary fire department when they decided they could best keep the home fires burning while their husbands were away at war by quenching the fires that threaten to destroy their homes.

The Laurel Volunteer Fire Department now has 10 women mainstays of its firefighting team and Fire Chief Norris Beall is loud in his praise of the women smoke-eaters who have already proved their worth in fighting everything from chicken-coop blazes to forest fires.

Chief Beall organized the women auxiliary soon after the armed forces made disastrous inroads on the department's manpower. Ten women responded when he called for volunteers and all have been trained and have been fighting fires since early last summer, when brush fires and forest fires were breaking out almost every day.

Most of the women attended a training course of the forest firefighting, service offered by the State Department of Forest and Parks. Those regular members of the fire department who had not been taken into the armed forces rounded out the technical education of the fire women."[96]

Women were also allowed to join the Branchville Volunteer Fire Department on a temporary basis during the war years. They used the Diamond "T" to fight fires. The first female crew consisted of Dorothy Stauffer, Mae Duvall, Blance Longnecker, Kitty Fortner, Cathy Kirkpatrick, Alma Caudell and Helen Longnecker.[97]

Several women from Bowie were also trained in firefighting. The first crew included: Mrs. Hazel Howard, Mrs.Inez Randolph, Mrs. Beatrice Wildman, and Mrs. Ruth Schaefer Lehman. The Office of Civil Defense supplied the Department with a special two-wheel trailer mounted fire pump. It was pulled by the 1930 Ford Model "A." Because of manifold restrictions from the Federal Government, its use was limited to fire drills and assuring proper mechanical functioning.[98]

Association News:

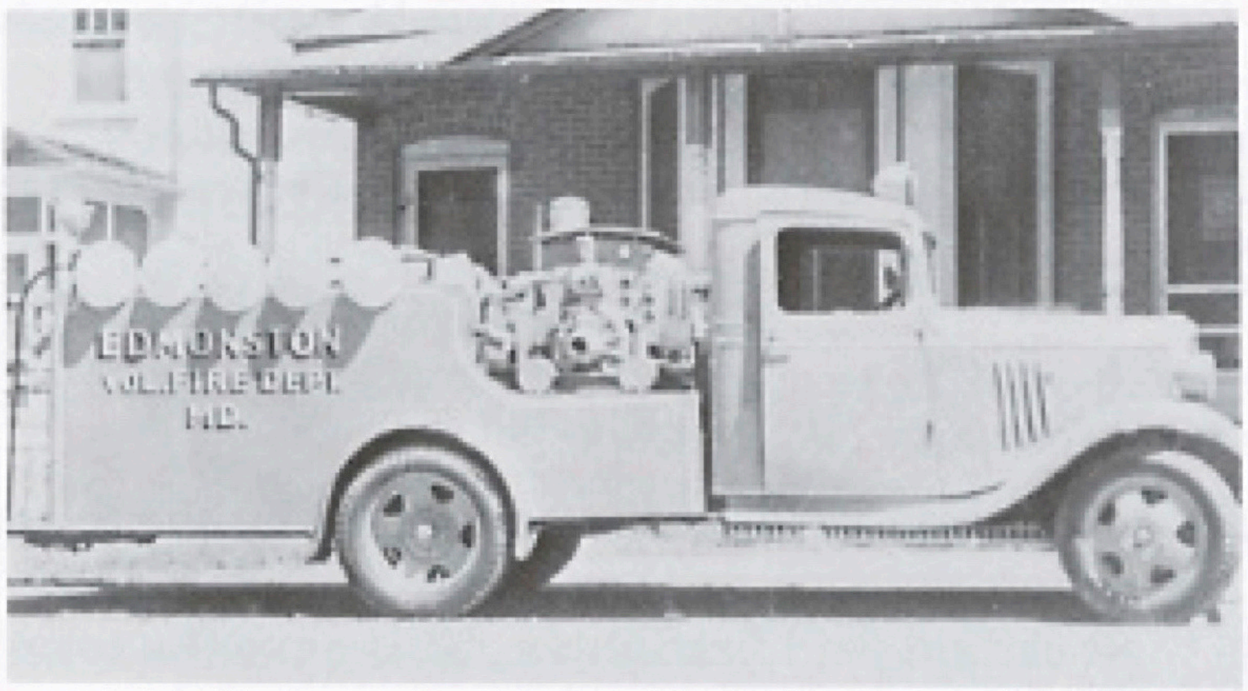
- Bowie started a Junior Fire Department. Qualifications for membership were: parental permission, at least 14-years of age, adhere to a strict code of discipline and ethics, remain in school as a student, participate and complete training courses, and attend drills.
- Bladensburg started several new auxiliary fire departments throughout their area. These units were equipped with Civil Defense portable pumps and equipment. Units were located in Edmonston, Rogers Heights, Landover Hills and West Lanham Hills.

New Equipment:

- Members of the Branchville Squad decided to place a second squad unit in service. A used Nash was converted and placed in service for $150. With two squads in service, their area of coverage increased west to Washington, D.C., and Montgomery County, north to Howard County, and south to "Cat Tail Hill" (Queens Chapel Road).
- Though new equipment was hard to come by, Clinton managed to purchase a new Brockway Tanker for $2,000. The company began collecting paper and scrap metal for the war effort. Fund-raising was difficult and operating funds were always needed.

Communications:

- The area around Lanham was in need of fire protection. So, the Glenn Dale Volunteer Fire Department had a party-line installed for the area. The phone and siren were connected to the Glenn Dale Post Office and the homes of four firemen. When the Postmaster, Mr. Suman was not available, one of the other four would stand by to answer calls. The Company's first due area ran from Finns Lane on the west, Hillmeade Road on the east and Central Avenue on the south.



- Bladensburg's firehouse was a local Civil Defense Control Center, with a switchboard manned around the clock by volunteer ladies.
- Branchville had a switchboard with six positions installed. The Ladies Auxiliary staffed the board during the day and the men worked during the evenings.

1941

The fire service in the County struggled during the war years to remain in operation. Members of Mount Rainier began volunteering to spend one night a week at the firehouse to safeguard against possible sabotage. This continued until the following year when a second paid firefighter was hired. Berwyn Heights had four military installations within 20 miles of the station operating military aircraft. Because of this, they organized a rescue unit trained to extricate student pilots and automobile drivers. Members received special training in heavy rescue techniques as well as first aid. This was the first squad unit in the County trained and equipped for heavy rescue instead of ambulance transport.

Takoma Park was again in the news as they attempted to join the Association. There application was rejected because they were not located in Prince George's County.

On January 17, 1941, a large fire destroyed the Del Rio Nightclub in Bladensburg. Firemen were delayed in arrival because of icy pavement and the building was quickly engulfed in flames. Despite the firefighters best efforts, the building was destroyed by the fire.

Oxon Hill Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary to the Oxon Hill Fire Department was started on January 23, 1941.

Association News:

- Appropriations from the County increased to $20,300. This was due to the increased activities of the Branchville Rescue Squad and the upgrading of several companies from Class "B" non-pumper, to Class "A" pumper ratings.

New Equipment:

- Laurel bought a 1941 Diamond "T" 500 g.p.m. Pumper at the start of the year. It was quickly placed in service.
- College Park was one of the many departments which tried to purchase new equipment during the war. At the outbreak of the war, College Park's equipment consisted of a 1929 Chevrolet

Brush Truck and a 1933 Pirsch Pumper. The brush truck was described as being in poor condition during a meeting on November 17, 1941.

•Members of Forestville showed their abilities when they converted a farm vehicle into a brush truck during the year. In addition, they constructed two new bays on the firehouse with donated materials and labor.[99]

Communications:

•There was discussion during the year about establishing a central fire alarm system. The Association decided that a radio-type system should be installed. Work progressed slowly during the year on the first Fire Board.

•Oxon Hill's fire alarm siren was connected with the telephone company in August 1941. Prior to this, all fire calls went to "Mr. Joe" Sheriff.

New Stations:

•Through the crisis, Boulevard Heights also overcame difficulties and constructed an addition of 32-feet by 40-feet, on the firehouse.

Fire Prevention:

•The statistical.report for the year showed there were 572 volunteers operating from 23 Fire Companies, five Rescue Squads, and one Rescue Squad Boat Unit. Apparatus carried 36,500 feet of hose, 1,334 feet of ladders, 5,055 gallons of water, and 63 fire extinguishers. These units responded to over 1,459 calls for assistance during the year.

1942

The volunteer companies continued to struggle with problems created by the war. Volunteer firemen were given extra gas ration coupons so they could answer alarms. Mount Rainier hired Richard Moore as their second paid firefighter. This gave the town personnel on duty 24-hours a day at the firehouse. At first, volunteers stood duty on Sundays during the daytime, but this was replaced by relief drivers who served the Sunday tour of duty, once every four or five weeks.

The College Park Volunteer Fire Department hired its first paid firemen during the year. Donations were collected from town residents to pay his salary. His hours were from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with a salary of $20 per week.

A unique homemade fire engine was constructed by the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Department in 1942. Financially unable to purchase new equipment, they combined an old school bus, a used water tank, and an automobile engine to make a fire engine.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUILDS OWN TRUCK AS PRIORITIES TIGHTEN

"Take an old school bus chassis, a farmer's discarded water tank and an automobile motor, add 500 manhours of hard work, and what do you get? A homemade fire engine for the Upper Marlboro (MD) Fire Department.

If you can't buy it, build it, is the answer of the town's volunteer firemen to priorities and difficulties. Although the fire engine still needs a ladder and other equipment, it has been used on more than 25 calls in the last six weeks, and firemen say it is superior to their other tow engines in fighting brush fires.

The firemen now are trying to raise money to cover the $225 cost of material for the homemade fire engine by delivering water to neighboring farmers at $5 a tankful.

The engine consists of a 504-gallon tank, once used by a farmer to store water, mounted on the body of an old school bus. A rotary pump with a capacity of 250 gallons a minute, powered by an automobile motor which was donated by a Marlboro dealer.

The truck carries 300-feet of hose in a compartment at the rear and there is room for several hundred feet more. The pumper develops a pressure of 150 pounds. When empty, the tank can be filled from a stream in two to two and a half minutes.

The fire truck has been equipped with a 1,500-watt floodlight mounted on an adjustable and detachable stand. From three to six men man the truck. Because of its water capacity of 500 gallons, it is particularly useful in fighting brush fires and forest fires."[100]

Association News:

- George Hudgins suggested, during the year, the Ladies Auxiliary should start a canteen unit to assist at fires. It would become known as the Prince George's Canteen Service.

New Equipment:

- The Buffalo Pumper, ordered by the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department in 1940, was finally delivered and placed in service.
- Forestville entered the squad business with the purchase of a used 1937 Ford Ambulance for $300. It responded on fire calls with the pumper, in the event a firefighter was injured. It was also used to transport members and their families to the hospital in case of illness or accident.

Fire Board:

- Mr. William J. Tierney began working to replace the cumbersome telephone dispatching system with the County's first emergency radio net. This would link the north-side fire stations to a transmitter at Hyattsville and south-side companies to a transmitter at Capitol Heights. The Hyattsville Air Raid Control Center was placed in operation on April 15, 1942, as part of the civilian defense setup. The two Fire Boards were the beginning of today's computerized fire dispatch center. Prince George's County became the first County to establish a County-wide fire communications dispatch system.[101]

Fire Prevention:

- The statistical report for the year showed several large increases. There were over 2,520 calls for assistance answered by the volunteer companies. The Rescue Squad's four units handled over 1,544 calls for medical assistance.

District Heights Volunteer Fire Department

This company was organized during 1942. Their first piece of equipment was a used Reo Pumper obtained through the efforts of Mr. William Wells, Sr. This unit was initially kept in a member's garage.

They sent a letter on October 12, 1942, to the Association requesting assistance.

"Dear Sirs:-

Some of the men in District Heights, Maryland, have formed the District Heights Volunteer Fire Department. We have been functioning now for four or five months and in that time have bought and paid for, out of our own funds, our fire equipment.

We now feel we have progressed far enough to qualify for membership in your organization. Enclosed, herewith, is $5 for the membership fee. Some of the men from our department will attend your next meeting. We will appreciate any further information at that time.

Very Truly yours,
Wm. H. Well, Jr., President."[102]

Camp Springs Army Air Field

Today, known as Andrew Air Force Base, this military facility was constructed, starting in the fall, in 1942. Original fire protection was probably provided by military personnel assigned to the facility. Later, full-time military firefighters, and eventually civilian personnel were hired to provide fire protection.

West Lanham Hills Volunteer Fire Department

In late 1942, 12 local residents organized a Civil Defense Unit. The charter members were: Leroy Koch, Carl Gohr, Gilbert Puffinberger, Wilbert Johnson, Robert L. Smith, Robert J. Smith, Howard Taylor, P. J. Nimro, Joseph Soucy, E. Daniel Piatt, A. P. Richardson and Thomas Laning. The first fire engine was a used Chevrolet Pickup Truck with a Civil Defense Portable Pump mounted on it. The equipment was stored in a borrowed shed for three years, until a more permanent building could be constructed.

1943

One new company was admitted to the Association, District Heights, Company 26. This brought the total number of member companies to 24. Together they responded to over 2,564 calls for assistance during the year. The Rescue Squad operated 11 squads and one boat. Most departments were still busy trying to provide increased service with reduced funds and manpower. The war years proved difficult for all Association members.

1944

The number of calls answered by the companies increased to over 3,092. Tragedy happened during one of the calls, when on April 4, 1944, Volunteer Firemen Robert Lohman, of Bladensburg, was killed in an automobile accident. He was a member of the crew responding to the hospital in the Packard Ambulance, when it crashed at Bladensburg Road and New York Avenue.

The County Police assisted the firemen during the year. With the acute manpower shortage, they would often park their only patrol car, covering the northern section of the County, to take ambulance calls. To help facilitate ambulance service, a two-way radio on the Police frequency was installed in the Bladensburg Ambulance.

New Equipment:

- Branchville obtained a special permit from the Office of Civil Defense, enabling the company to purchase a 1944 American LaFrance Pumper. It cost $5,567.53, with an additional $1,634 for other equipment.
- Since little new equipment could be purchased, Riverdale Heights sent their Hahn back to the factory for rebuilding. It had a new body installed and was returned with all the chrome painted black.
- Oxon Hill was one of the companies lucky enough to purchase a new fire engine during the year. A Buffalo Pumper was bought to replace the old Ford Model "A" Pumper. By October, the unit was paid for through the hard work of the members and donations from the community.

Morningside Volunteer Fire Department

The Morningside Volunteer Fire Department was organized in December of 1944, to protect local citizens and their property from loss due to fire. The meeting was the result of a tragic loss of two lives earlier that month in a house fire. A used 1929 Ford Model "A" was purchased from the Oxon Hill Volunteer Fire Department for $250 as the first fire engine. The group moved quickly to join the Association, and did so the following year.[103]

1945

The Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department suffered two deaths during the year. The Chief, Clinton D. Walker died suddenly from a heart attack on March 25, 1945. While responding to a fire alarm he began feeling ill, the engine stopped at his house, and the crew helped him inside and continued on the call. When they returned, they learned the Chief had suffered a fatal heart attack. A second tragedy struck the company when, on November 13, 1945, Jesse Lovejoy died. He had responded on a call with the rescue squad for an automobile accident on U. S. Route 1. While searching for victims, he accidently stepped on a live wire and was electrocuted.

West Lanham Hills Ladies Auxiliary

In October 1945, the wives of the firemen formed an auxiliary. Their purpose was to support the men with donations and assist with social events. Margret Koenig was the first President of the group.

Morningside Ladies Auxiliary

On January 23, 1945, a group of interested ladies met for the purpose of organizing an auxiliary. There were 18 charter members of the organization.

New Equipment:

- With the war ending, the need for specialized equipment in the County developed. Cottage City purchased their first hydraulically operated 65' Aerial Ladder Truck from Seagrave in 1945.
- Berwyn Heights placed in service a used 1936 Panel Truck to haul the heavy rescue equipment. This unit was kept in service for five years until it was replaced by a new unit.
- Boulevard Heights purchased an Oren-Diamond "T" Engine to replace the 1928 Ford Model "T."
- Glenn Dale began its modernization program with the purchase of a 1945 Mack Pumper.

Fire Control Board:

- Mr. Karl Young was named as Director of the Fire Control Board. This unit was kept in operation after the war to continue as the communications center. He reported that there were six full-time dispatchers employed by the two control boards, giving 24-hour coverage. Since 1942, they had handled over 3,967 fire calls, 6,277 ambulance calls, and 32 Air Raid alarms. Starting in 1945, the County yearly appropriated $12,000 for continued operation of the control centers. Plans were started to combine the two dispatch centers into one. [104]

New Stations:

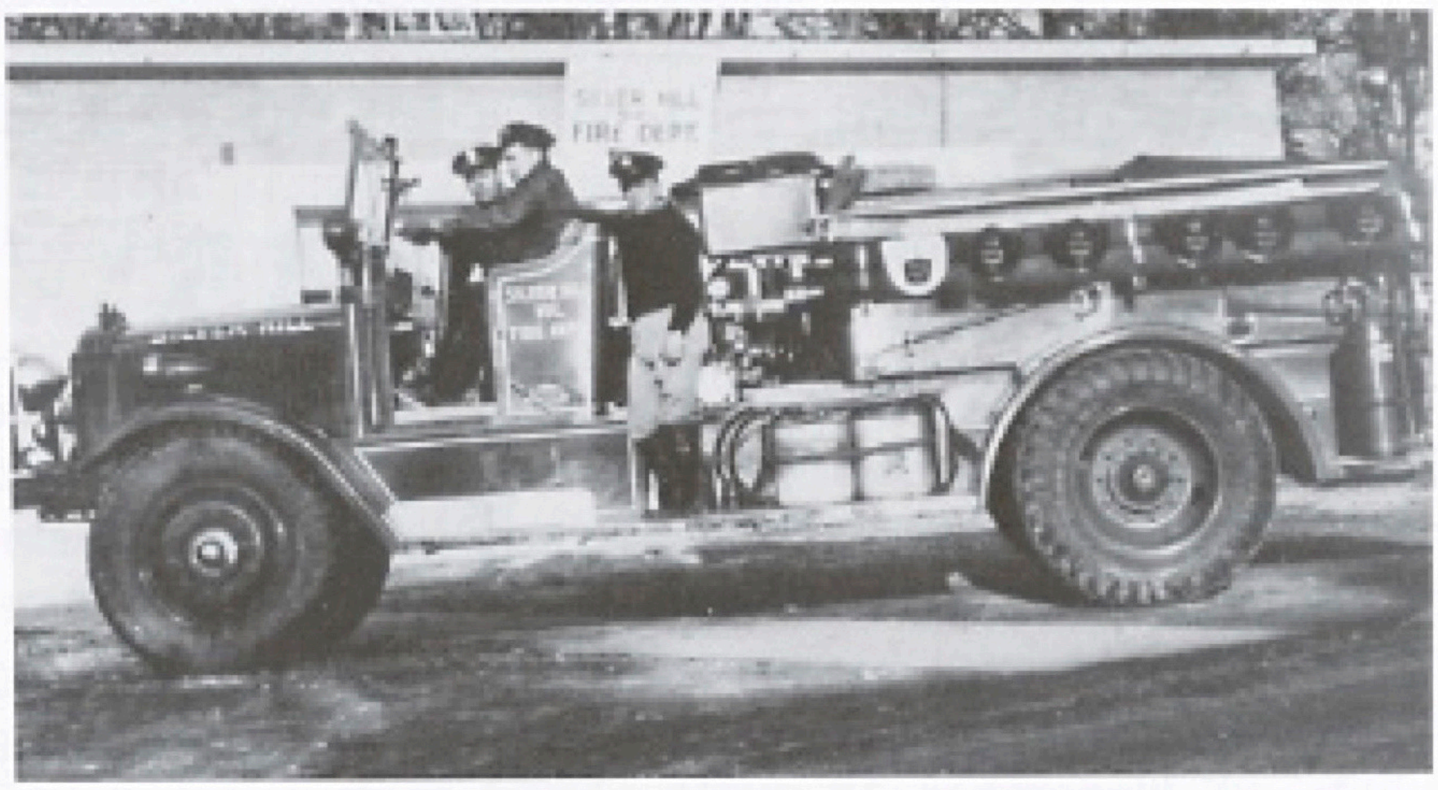
- On September 7, 1945, ground was broken at College Park for a new building to house the Fire Service Extension Department and the College Park Volunteer Fire Department. Construction was started in October with a projected completion date of September 1946.
- Morningside built their first fire station in 1945 on the site of the present station.
- West Lanham Hills erected their first fire station with volunteer labor. Building materials were donated, with the structural steel reportedly obtained from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge construction site.

Fire Prevention:

- The statistical report for the year showed there were 56 pieces of firefighting equipment, which responded to over 2,553 calls for assistance. They carried 10,215 gallons of water, 2,558 feet of ladders and 71,150 feet of hose.

Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department

During the early 1940's, Silver Hill was a rural area. The main road, Maryland State Route 5, leading to the south, passed through the area. During World War II, fire protection was provided by a Civil Defense Unit using a trailer pumper with 200-feet of hose. The unit was kept in a garage at the home of Mr. George Rockey, Sr., in the 4200 block of Branch Avenue.



In the fall of 1945, there was a serious house fire on Cedar Drive. The Civil Defense Unit was no longer active and the closest fire departments were in Boulevard Heights, District Heights and Morningside. The Silver Hill Citizen's Association met in November 1945, to consider the fire problem. They formed the Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department the same month with 10 charter members. The first Chief was Mr. H. A. Duke.

On December 20, the company purchased a used Reo Fire Truck from the District Heights Volunteer Fire Department for $500. Not having a fire station, the unit was kept in the Chief's garage at 201 Park Boulevard. This building is still located not far from the station.[105]

Landover Hills Volunteer Fire Department

The Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department originally served the Town of Landover Hills. Many local residents joined the department. From this group, a local auxiliary was started during World War II. This Civil Defense Unit used a trailer pumper with 200-feet of hose. Phil McCary was elected as the first Fire Chief of this organization.

In October 1945, this group met to organize a volunteer fire company. The idea had been raised before, but with little success. Mr. E. W. Houston was elected as Temporary Treasurer and each man paid $1 in dues. The following week, six new men joined the company.

College Park Ladies Auxiliary

When College Park moved into its new headquarters, which offered enlarged facilities for social functions, the volunteers sought help from community women. Mr. Kenneth Crisp and Mr. Francis Zeltman were appointed to help with the new organization.

The interested ladies held their first meeting on October 22, 1946, at which time the functions were explained by Mr. Crisp. These included the raising of funds for the Fire Department through bingos and dinners, as well as, providing food for the firemen when they were on calls for extended periods.

The first officers were: Martha Houchens, President; Elsi Orndorff, Vice President; Mary Botts, Secretary; Anne Zeltman, Treasurer; Elsie Richards, Chaplain; and Rose Suit, Guard.

Another meeting was held during November in Mr. Holloway's basement. At this meeting, plans were made for a Constitution and By-Laws. They were adopted at the December meeting.[105]

1946

This was the first year of peace following World War II. The various volunteer companies were slowly getting back on their feet. Members were returning from the service and new equipment was once again available for purchase. Several groups began organizing new fire companies throughout the County. Many of these were formed by the Civil Defense Units. This included the District Heights Rescue Squad, Greenbelt Rescue Squad and Chapel Oaks Volunteer Fire Department. By the end of the year, there were 26 member companies, with over 1,248 active volunteer firemen.

Association News:

- By January of 1946, the Landover Hills Volunteer Fire Department organization was completed. Their only piece of apparatus was the Office of Civil Defense Trailer Pumper. The first officers of the group were: E. W. Houston, President; Clarence Pendleton, Vice President; J. F. X. Mayhew, Treasurer; Clarence H. Cramer, Fire Chief; and J. F. X. Mayhew, Assistant Chief.

New Equipment:

- Landover Hills quickly spent $300 to purchase a used Dodge Truck. The members converted it into the first fire engine for the company.

Fire Control Board:

- Improvements at the Fire Control Board continued to advance. Two-way radios were installed in fire trucks at Marlboro, Cottage City, Brentwood, and Mount Rainier. Ambulances at Branchville, Brentwood, and Marlboro also had two-way radios installed. The Oxon Hill Fire Department purchased its own two-way radios for their fire trucks. The radios enabled crews to receive calls without having to telephone the dispatch center after completing a call. The Fire Control Board handled 1,424 fire calls and 2,672 ambulance calls during the past year.[107]

New Stations:

- College Park and the University of Maryland dedicated the new firehouse and training area on September 28, 1946. The completed building cost over $160,000, with most of the money coming from the State.
- The Clinton Volunteer Fire Department began building a new fire station. Two lots were purchased for $1,750. Construction was started with members providing much of the labor and materials. The company received $200 in plumbing supplies in exchange for a fresh ham.[108]
- Members of the Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department were granted a revocable license to build a firehouse on U.S. Government property at 3900 Silver Hill Road. Construction of the firehouse was expensive because the outside bricks had to match those used on other government buildings in the Suitland Federal Tract.
- The first firehouse for Landover Hills was a Quonset hut. A deal was made with the Board of Education for use of school land bordering on the west end of Taylor Street. By August 1946, the hut was erected at a cost of

Glenn Dale Ladies Auxiliary

At a meeting on April 3, 1946, the auxiliary was formed. The first officers were: Ruth Truitt, President; Ruth Harvey, Vice President; Helen Bladt, Secretary; Dorothy Sauer, Treasurer; and Lillian Seigler, Chaplain.

$9,000. With only $3,000 in the bank, a loan was negotiated for the balance. They had a large debt to repay for the firehouse and fire engine. Notes were $4,404.83 on the building, and $1,146 on the engine. Monthly payments on the loans were $188. In addition, monthly payments for heating, lighting and insurance added another $98 in bills.

Greenbelt Volunteer Rescue Squad

In late October, 1946, the squad was organized by Dick Bates, Robert Gray and Werner Steinle. They pooled their money together and made a $400 down payment on a used 1936 Buick Ambulance. At times, the members paid for gasoline out of their own pockets to continue service.

Chapel Oaks Volunteer Fire Department

The Chapel Oaks Volunteer Fire Department was organized after the tragic deaths of several children in Deanwood Park during 1946. Several pieces of used apparatus were purchased from other fire companies.

Shortly after organizing, a fire destroyed the fire station, including the fire engine. With stout hearts and determination, the members started to rebuild the company. A used Mack was purchased from the District Heights Volunteer Fire Department and the company was back in service.[109]

1947

During the year, two new companies were admitted as members in the Association: Silver Hill (Company 29) and Landover Hills (Company 30). Another of the Civil Defense Units began organizing a fire company in the Beltsville area.

Accokeek Ladies Auxiliary

This group was started in January 1947 by twelve ladies. Through the years they supported the department in every endeavor.

Beltsville Volunteer Fire Department

The possibilities of air raid attacks, with accompanying disastrous results during World War II, led to the organization of various civilian groups for the purpose of protecting life and property. Citizens of Beltsville and Vansville did not lag behind in this respect. A group was organized, which could provide assistance to local fire departments in combatting fires which might occur as a result of air raids.

Twelve citizens were members of the early group. They were: John D. Smith, John T. Gaffney, Robert J. Huston, M. H. Davis, Otto J. Myers, Paul C. Underwood, Fred T. Ridgeway, George Beers, Sam Williams, Joseph A. Chaney, Leonard C. Carpenter and Charles A. Brady.

This group constantly prepared both men and equipment to take action in case of an emergency. An Office of Civil Defense Trailer Pumper was obtained, kept in shape and ready for use at all times. A first aid station, equipped with bandages, stretchers, antiseptics and other equipment was set up in the Beltsville School.

After the war, the group was disbanded. However, interest in local fire protection still remained active. From the time they disbanded until the summer of 1946, activities of the group remained static.

Members of the original group, together with others, began the process of organizing a fire company. A charter was applied for and the Beltsville Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated during 1947. There were 43 members in the group. The first meeting, at which official minutes were recorded, was held on January 29, 1947. At this meeting, a temporary Constitution and By-Laws were adopted for a period of three months. A committee was appointed to draw up a permanent Constitution and By-Laws. A used fire truck was purchased from the government along with the old Civil Defense Trailer Pumper. The permanent rules were adopted on March 7, 1947. The first installed officers were: Fred C. Knauer, Fire Chief; and John T. Gaffney, President.

Two of the main issues facing the new organization was the purchase of new equipment and the construction of a firehouse. It was decided the logical move was to obtain a lot and construct a building, and then obtain equipment. Through the generosity of Mr. Sims Jones, a large lot located on Old Powder Mill Road, was deeded to the Department in 1947.

A Building Committee was appointed and plans were drawn for a building, which could house three pieces of apparatus. A much needed community hall was also included in the plans. Financing and procedures for construction then became the major issue. The decision was made to proceed on the pay as you go plan, using volunteer labor as much as possible, rather than spending more to speed up construction through borrowed funds.

Work actually started on the firehouse in November 1947. The need for an adequate public meeting place was noticeably evident when firemen were arranging for their own meetings. Meetings were held at the school, the Episcopal Parish Hall, the Masonic Hall and the chicken coop across from the school.[110]

1948

The Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department was placed in the national spotlight during the year. A Commemorative Stamp was issued by the Post Office which featured the company's new Mack pumper.

RIVERDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S NEW PUMPER
PICTURED ON COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

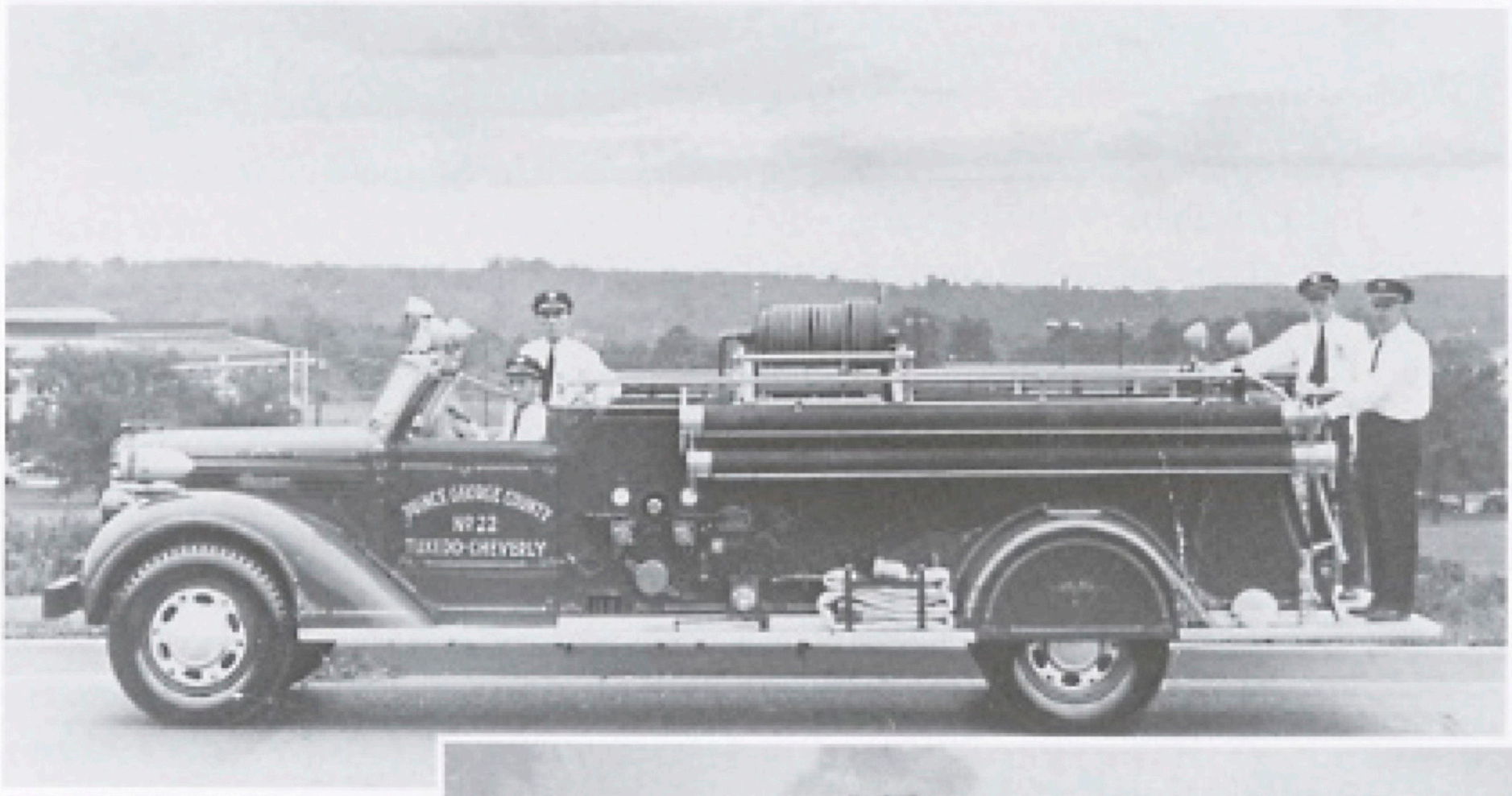
"If the boys of the Riverdale Fire Department are wearing their chest a bit higher these days, and bestowing extra-loving care upon their gorgeous new pumper and light truck, let no one look askance.

Riverdale has a right to be proud. Because next Monday, the beautiful black and white job with the gold trim, joins the company of Stuyvesant of Colonial New York, organizer of the first volunteer fire department on a commemorative stamp issued by the U. S. Post Office Department in honor of the nation's volunteer firemen.

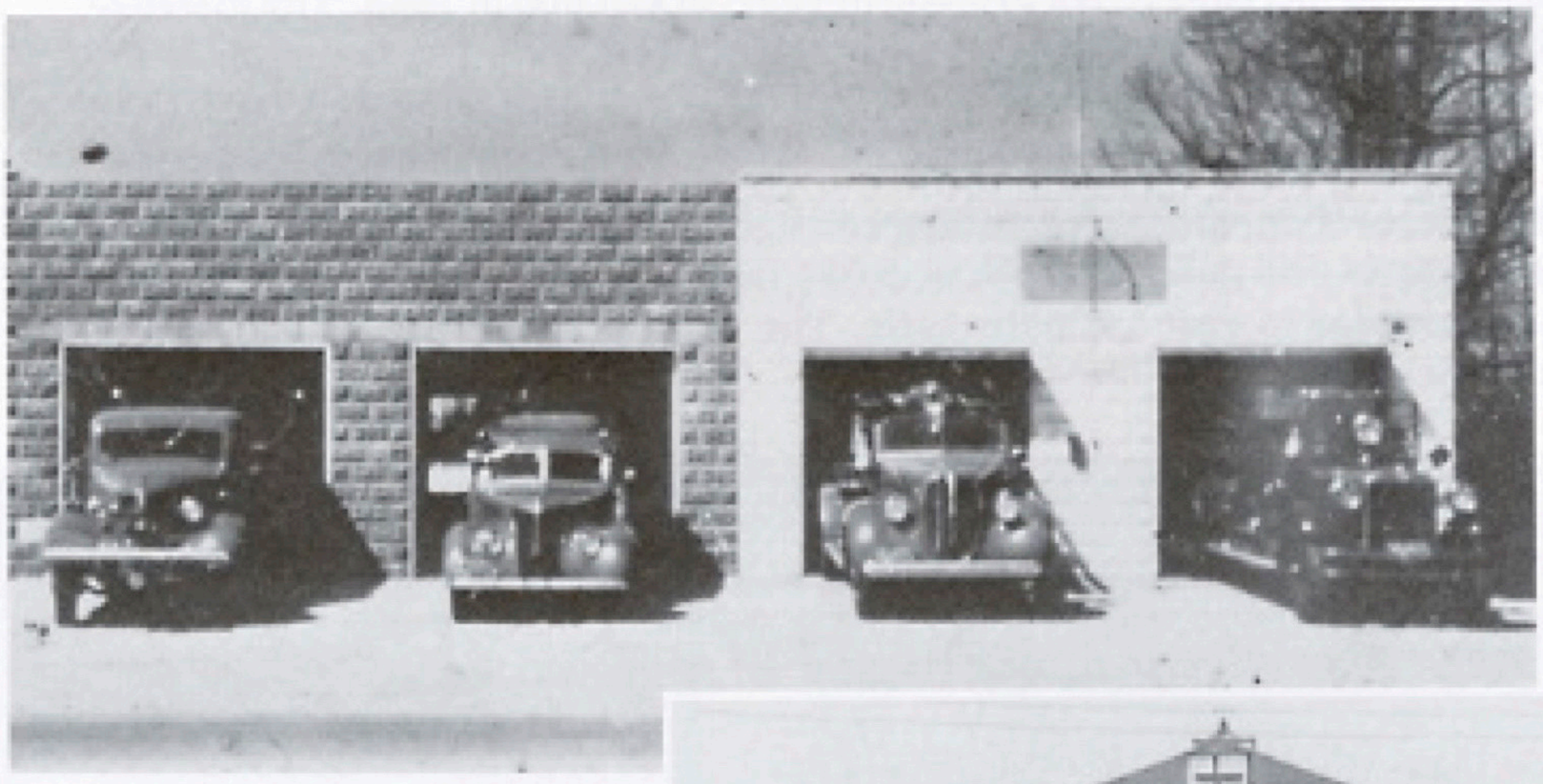
That the shiny new truck depicted on the stamp, as the representation of modern volunteer fire-fighting apparatus, is actually Riverdale's pumper, as has been rumored for several weeks, was, according to fire department officials, confirmed this week by Representative J. Caleb Boggs, of Delaware, who introduced in Congress theBill authorizing the stamp's issuance.

And, to make the cup even more full of joy for the local smoke-eaters, came also this week, an invitation from the City of Dover, Del., through whose Post Office the stamp will be issued on Monday, October 4, (coincident with Fire Prevention Week) to attend ceremonies in connection with the issue.

The single honor accorded the Riverdale Company (the truck was selected over some 50 other modern engines whose photographs were submitted to the Post Office Department) is a fitting reward for long months of planning and waiting for the apparatus." [111]



STATION PHOTOGRAPHS CIRCA 1940



Association News:

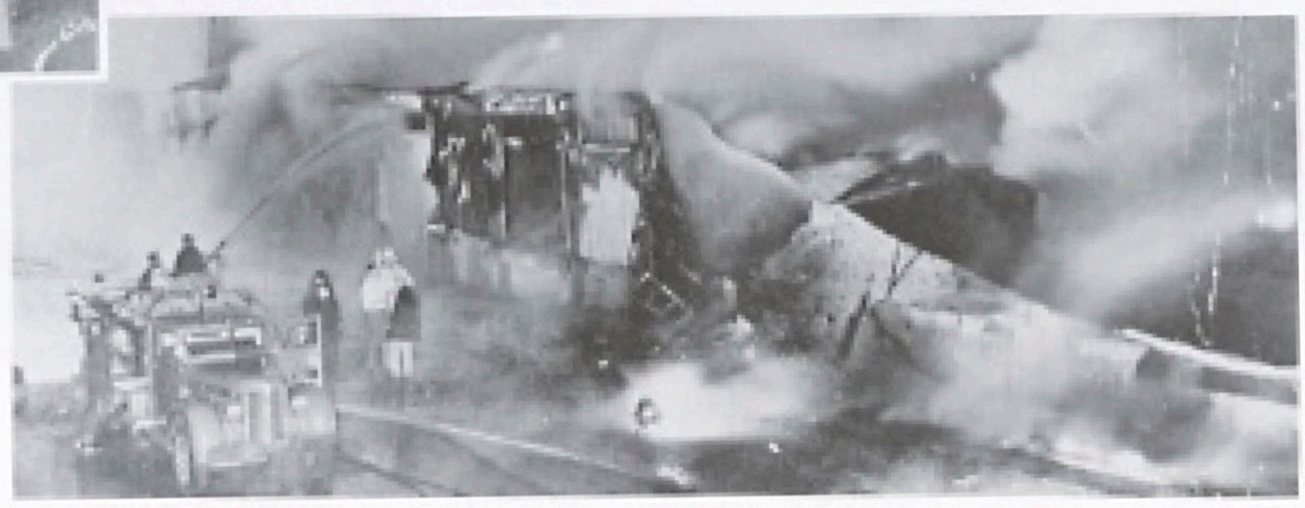
- County aid to the volunteers had increased from $15,000 in 1931, to $48,600 in 1948. The increase was mostly for funding of additional companies, which had started since the founding of the aid package.

Fire Prevention:

- There were 62 motorized pieces of apparatus (including two light trucks, three ladder trucks and one rescue truck), carrying 14,740 gallons of water, 3,034 feet of ladders, and 100,450 feet of hose. The companies responded to over 4,000 fire calls. The 12 ambulances responded to over 2,659 calls for medical assistance.

1949

The three-alarm Town Hall fire in Berwyn on March 14, 1949, again showed the necessity of a Mutual Aid Program. All northern fire companies responded to the fire; however, southern fire companies were never dispatched or transferred. Units from the County and the District of Columbia battled the blaze. A meeting was held two weeks later to address the problems with Mutual Aid. It was agreed the Fire Board would use its best judgement in case of large fires, dispatching equipment as called for by the local Chief in charge, make transfers as necessary to protect the areas of the companies sent to the scene, and make Mutual Aid calls to surrounding jurisdictions only through the Fire Control Board.



A second large fire occurred on September 25, 1949. Fire destroyed a granary at the Beltsville Agriculture Center. Nineteen pieces of apparatus from the County responded to the alarm shortly after midnight. Within 16 minutes, the second-alarm was sounded. Several volunteer firemen were injured while battling the $120,000 blaze.

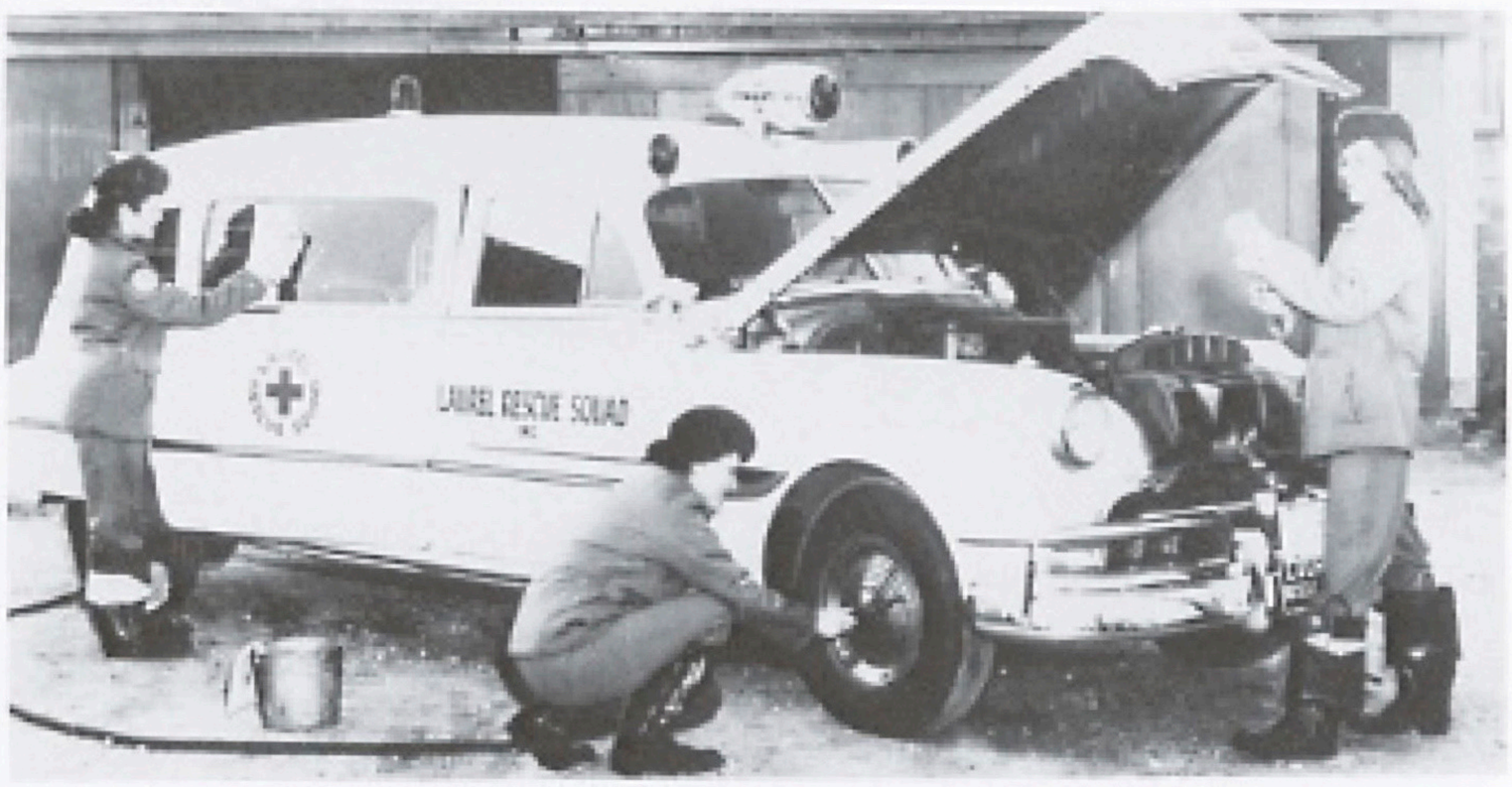
The Landover Hills Volunteer Fire Department suffered a tragedy when Volunteer Fire Fighter John Hamer died from burns sustained while fighting a house fire. He had been badly burned while rescuing two children from his own house.

New Equipment:

- In March, the Oxon Hill Volunteer Fire Department decided to organize a Rescue Squad. Donations by three members enabled them to purchase a used ambulance from the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department. Extensive repairs and reconditioning preceded a donation drive through the community. This unit began coverage from the District to Charles County, bounded on the north by Route 5 and on the west by the Potomac River. This unit relieved pressure on the Marlboro and Forestville squads, which had been providing coverage of these areas.[112]
- Accokeek purchased a 1949 International-American Engine. Company equipment was fitted with 2-way radios.

Fire Control Board:

- Another large problem was the increased radio traffic on the police radios. At the time, both the police and fire were on the same frequency. Through efforts of the Association, a separate frequency of 33.86 was assigned to the fire companies. Mr. William Tierney began installing a radio tower at the Hillside Firehouse. Remote controls were installed at the Capitol Heights and Hyattsville Control Centers. Two-way radios were in operation at 19 fire companies and nine squads.



Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad

The idea of organizing an ambulance service in Laurel, was first set forth by the Laurel Police Association in 1949. With Laurel's population steadily increasing and many serious automobile accidents occurring in and near Laurel on the heavily traveled U.S. Route 1, the need for a local rescue squad had become critical.

After the closing of Warren Clinic, the nearest hospital service available to Laurel residents was either in Baltimore, Riverdale, or Cheverly. The nearest ambulance service available was the Branchville Rescue Squad, which covered the entire area from College Park, north to Laurel. The inadequacy of this arrangement was forcibly pointed out when a prominent Laurel businessman was involved in an accident on U.S. Route 1, and lay on the highway for 45 minutes before an ambulance arrived.

Even though members of the Laurel Police Association could see the need, they realized a rescue squad would have to be a separate independent organization, due to the equipment needed. Mr. James Alexander, President of the Laurel Police Association, led the campaign to collect information and to formulate plans on organizing and operating a rescue squad. It was three years before the plans for this new organization were formalized and operations began.[113]

1950

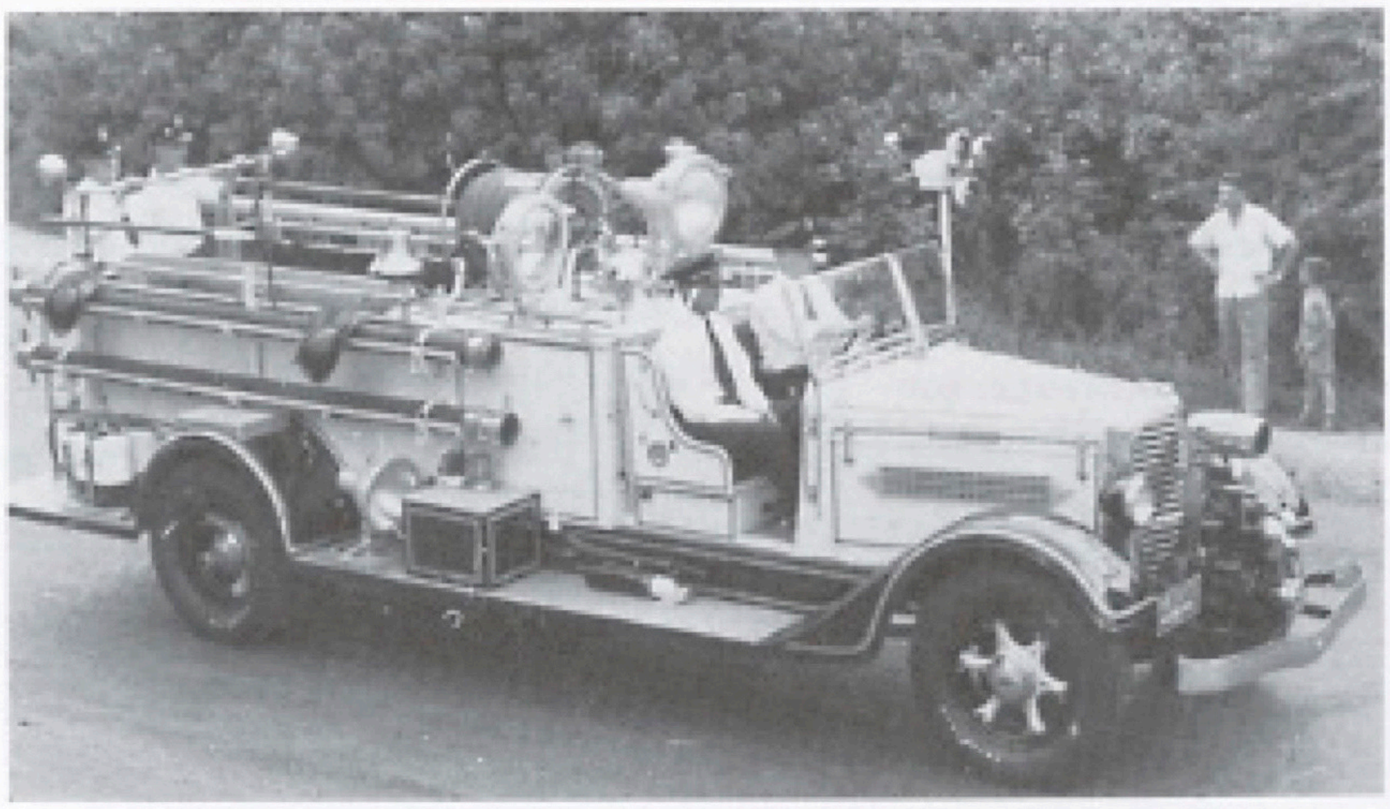
The Association began the publication of a newsletter, The Prince George's Fireman. Hyattsville purchased a new open cab American LaFrance Pumper for $14,000. In turn, they sold their 1917 American LaFrance to the newly formed Kentland Volunteer Fire Department. College Park also upgraded their fleet with the purchase of a 1950 Mack Model "L" 750 g.p.m. Pumper replacing the 1933 Pirsch.

Berwyn Heights improved their Rescue Squad Truck with the addition of a new 1950 GMC Truck. New equipment and ideas made this the best equipped unit in the County for heavy duty rescue work. An ambulance was purchased, in May, 1950, by the Beltsville Fire Department. This placed an additional squad on the north-side of the County.

Allentown Road Volunteer Fire Department

The Allentown Road Volunteer Fire Department held its initial organization meeting at the Oaklawn Community Center on June 1, 1950. Twenty-seven community residents attended the meeting to discuss the need for a fire department in the area. The need was precipitated by two residential fires in the area, one which resulted in the loss of a life.

The distance of the Allentown area from area fire departments required considerable response time. It was felt improved fire protection could be established by local residents. Mr. Ray Hanbury was appointed Chairman of a citizens group to organize the fire company.



On June 5, 1950, the first officers of the Board of Directors were elected. There were 11 charter members of the Company. Mr. Hanbury was elected the first Fire Chief and Mr. Earl Burgess as President. Land was purchased on Allentown Road on June 12, 1950, for construction of a firehouse. In October, work started on the building with members providing much of the labor.

They later purchased a used Diamond "T" from Riverdale, and a used Seagrave from the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department.[114]

1951

The big news for the year was the push to start the first County-wide Fire Codes, by Mr. Joseph Mayhew. Many meetings held and studies done in an attempt to get the codes adopted.

District Heights Ladies Auxiliary

The auxiliary was formed on September 6, 1951, under the direction of Mrs. Magdalene Schmidt, State Organizer. The first officers were: Frances Wells, President; Belle Dries, Vice President; Sylvia Denton, Secretary; and Evelyn Blackman, Treasurer.

Association News:

- Hyattsville was the first company to hire a paid Fire Chief. During 1951, Charles DiVincenzo was elected to fill this position. He was the first paid Chief in the County. They also began operating a temporary station on the west end of town. A pumper was parked at a car dealer's during the day and returned to the station at night.[115]

New Equipment:

- Oxon Hill replaced the Reo with a new 1951 GMC Fire Engine.
- Forestville ordered a new American Marsh-Ford 600 g.p.m. Pumper during the early part of 1951. This was the first new piece of equipment since 1939 for the fire company.
- Accokeek purchased a used 1941 Buick Ambulance from District Heights to start a Rescue Squad.

Fire Control Board:

•The Fire Control Board expanded with the addition of direct telephone lines to Chapel Oaks, Accokeek and Andrews Air Force Base.

New Stations:

•Bladensburg began plans to construct a new fire station on Edmonston Road. Plans were drawn up, however, construction did not start for another four years.

•Branchville found its space getting cramped and began plans to expand the firehouse. Plans were made for a six-bay, two-story, 120-foot by 48-foot firehouse. The old buildings were torn down and the engines kept under tarpaulins. The new building cost over $85,000 to build.

•Oxon Hill began plans for the construction of a new firehouse a block down the street.

Allentown Road Ladies Auxiliary

This group was organized in September 1951. Countless hours were spent by the ladies raising funds through dinners, bake sales, and parties.

Kentland Volunteer Fire Department

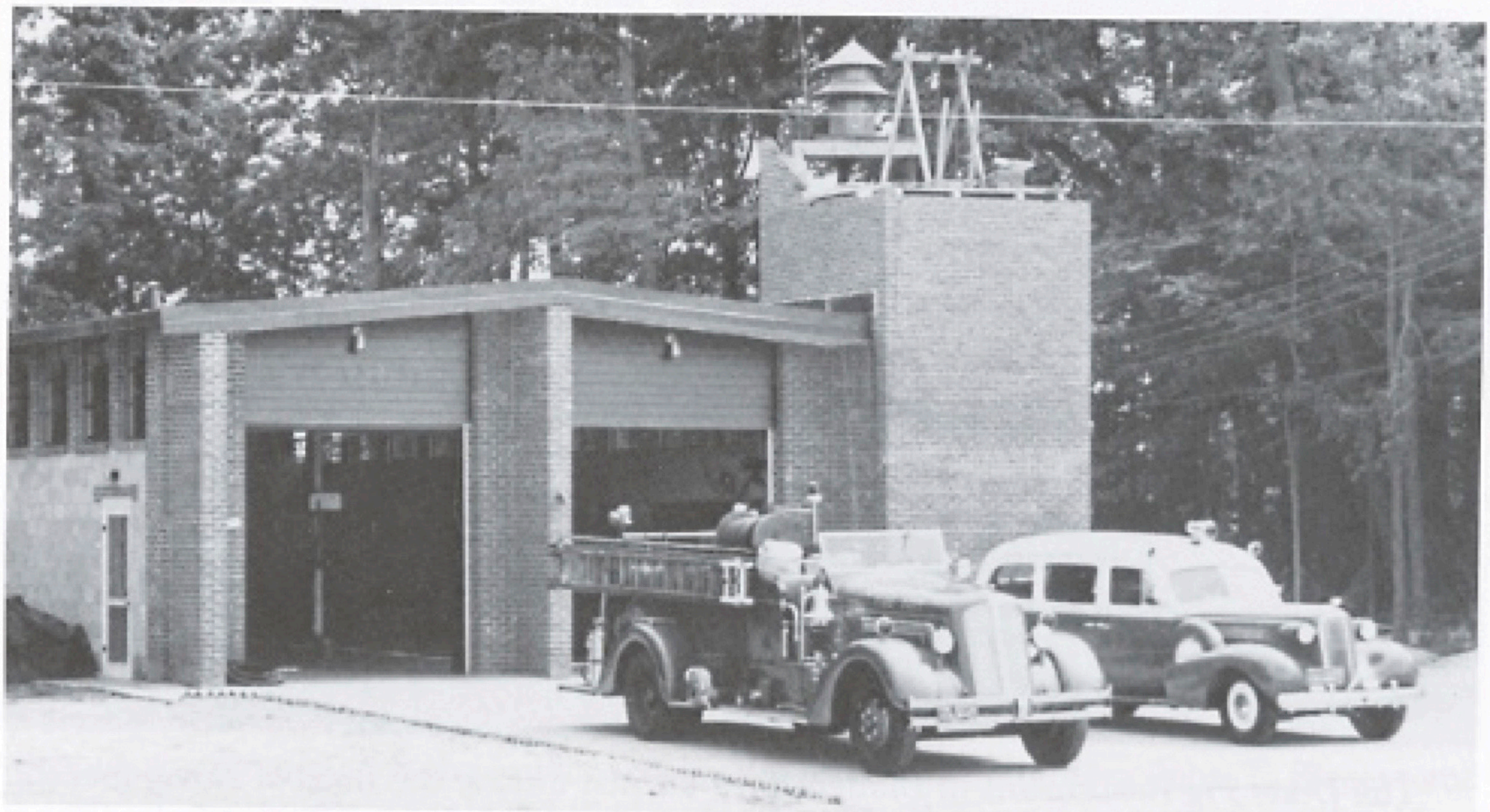
Bob Baeschlin and John Wilding invited 10 neighbors over to Bob's house one night in 1951. The group discussed starting a volunteer fire department to protect their new homes. Some had been volunteer firemen before; others just thought it would take too long for help to arrive if a fire should occur.

With the help of friends from other fire departments, like Cottage City and Hyattsville, they scraped together $1,000, and bought a surplus 1941 Ford Pumper from the Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department. The pumper was originally kept in the driveway of Bob Baseschlin's house.

The first setback occurred when the pride of the new department, the 1941 pumper, flipped while responding to a brush fire. They quickly scraped together another $100 dollars, and bought a used 1928 American LaFrance Pumper from the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department. This unit had right-hand drive and chain-driven power. It was hardly state-of-the-art, but it got the job done.

Kentland grew in the 1950's and the Department grew with it. The West Brothers donated land on 76th Avenue and the Department began building its first firehouse. Combining donations from area merchants, fund raisers, and donated labor, the building took shape. The new station looked rather strange with an old fire engine in it.[116]

Chillum-Adelphi Volunteer Fire Department



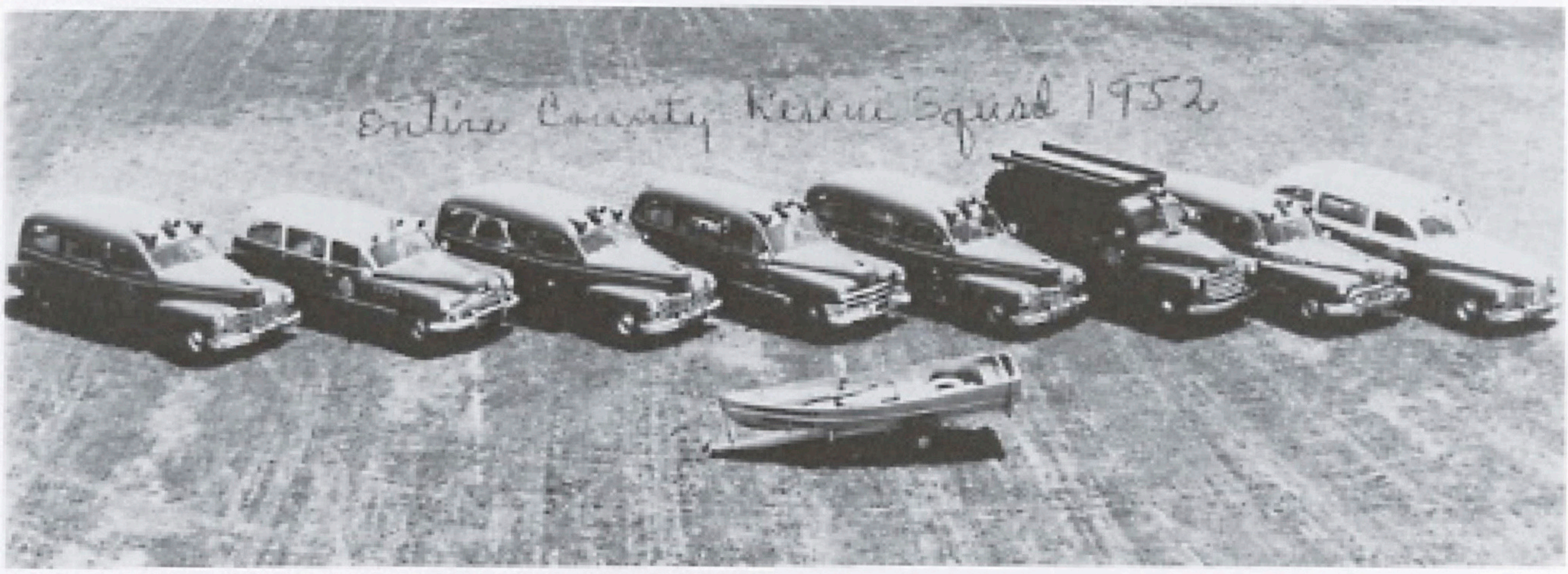
The Chillum-Adelphi Volunteer Fire Department was chartered under the corporate laws on June 8, 1951. It was organized to protect citizens of the area against the ravage of fire and other emergencies. The group first began organizing in March of 1951.

The area was rapidly growing and the need for fire protection in the unincorporated area could be plainly seen. Four years before, fire companies of the surrounding communities had furnished the area with fire protection. During the war years and post war years, the area changed from a rural area to groups of highly populated communities.

The first job facing the new department was to influence the defeat of the unfair Fire Tax Bill. This bill had been passed by the State Legislature during the formation of the department. It called for the people of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Precincts of the 17th Election District, to pay a fire tax which would be distributed to the surrounding municipalities. This would leave the new department with no means of support.

The company purchased, on credit, a used 1937 Seagrave Pumper from the Aberdeen, Maryland Fire Department for $3,000. The money to pay the loan was raised through door-to-door soliciting in the area. The final payment was made in the fall of 1951. The engine was kept at the College Park Volunteer Fire Station since the new department didn't have a firehouse. Meanwhile, the members began the search for land on which to build their own structure.[117]

1952



The Dixie Pig Restaurant in Bladensburg burned during the flood of November 22, 1952. With no access because of the high water, over six feet deep, local firemen from Hyattsville, Bladensburg, Cottage City, Mount Rainier, and Brentwood could only watch as the building burned.

The Laurel Rescue Squad continued its organization efforts with a public meeting on January 29, 1952. A plan of operation was presented by James Alexander to the 52 people at the meeting. It was voted to organize, followed by the election of the first officers.

A second meeting was held on February 5, 1952, at which time the group became known as The Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc. The charter was presented, accepted, and signed by members of the first Board of Directors; Bernard Thomas, William Rowles, Maurice Griffith, James Baxter, and James Alexander. Thus, these five became the charter members. This was the third independent rescue squad to be organized in the State. They were also the first group to allow women as regular members.

On Friday, February 8, 1952, a first aid class was started by Mr. James Sherman at the Laurel Armory. The American Legion Post #80 soon donated a used 1940 Miller-LaSalle Ambulance to the squad. It was kept at Rowle's Amoco Service Station, located at Washington Boulevard and Montgomery Streets. An emergency phone was installed at the station.

The ambulance made its first run one week prior to the formal dedication of the unit. The dedication was held on Sunday, March 16, 1952. Later in the year, a new 1952 Pontiac Ambulance was purchased for $3,200. A deposit of $500 was made on delivery. The third unit for the squad was a rescue truck built by members in September 1952.

New Equipment:

- Hyattsville purchased the first commercially produced squad truck from American LaFrance. A scrap drive was held to raise funds for the new apparatus.
- Marlboro purchased a 1951 Ford Pumper with a 300-gallon booster tank. While the unit was in excellent condition, it was soon sold to the Avalon Shores Volunteer Fire Department because the 300-gallon tank was inadequate for rural building fires.

New Stations:

- Members of Bowie began the planning stages for opening a second station in the Belair section of town. Eventually with no cost, but many strings attached, the land needed for the new station was obtained.
- Chillum-Adelphi began construction of a firehouse on a tract of land, today known as 7901 Riggs Road in November 1952. The building was completed the following March with the majority of work performed by the members.

1953

Tragedy struck in Hyattsville on October 21, 1953, when two firemen were killed on a fire call. The ladder truck responded to a call at 4715 Annapolis Road. After being placed in service, they began returning to the firehouse when, a commercial truck appeared and without warning, struck the ladder truck. Volunteer Fire Fighters John T. Streets and William R. Stainback, were both killed instantly when they were knocked from the side of the ladder truck. The commercial truck was operated by James Robinson, who was charged with two counts of manslaughter, driving while drunk, reckless driving, driving to the left of center, having no driver's license, and leaving the scene of an accident. [118]

Association News:

- Two new companies joined the rolls during the year: Kentland (Company 33) and Chillum-Adelphi (Company 34).
- County support to the volunteers increased to $3,000 per company, a total of over $99,000 per year.
- There were 32 engine companies, four ladder truck companies, and 15 Rescue Squad Units in the County.
- During 1953, Hyattsville hired two additional paid firefighters. This placed seven firemen and a paid Fire Chief on duty in the town.
- Glenn Dale was one of the local squad units dispatched to a Union Station runaway train incident.

New Equipment:

- Cottage City converted the 1939 Seagrave into a heavy duty rescue squad. This unit was like Berwyn Height's truck in that it was designed for heavy rescue and not patient transport.
- The College Park Volunteer Fire Department saw the need for a ladder truck. They soon signed a contract with the Mack Company for a 85-foot Aerial Ladder Truck. At this time, there were only four aerial ladder trucks in the entire County. Because the unit would be serving the area of Chillum-Adelphi, tax funds from the area were used by College Park for the new truck.
- Kentland purchased its first new engine during 1953. A Seagrave was bought to replace the older unit. Many of the members took out mortgages on their own homes to finance the purchase.
- Laurel Rescue purchased a new 1953 Ford Ambulance to replace the original 1940 Miller-LaSalle Ambulance.

Fire Control Board:

- Chillum-Adelphi and Kentland were connected to the Hyattsville Fire Board while Marlboro and Allentown were connected to the Capitol Heights Fire Board this left only the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department without a connection to one of the Fire Boards. Over the past year, they handled 2,572 fire calls, 5,072 ambulance calls, and 1,106 miscellaneous calls.

New Stations:

- Berwyn Heights constructed a new firehouse on property adjoining their station at 57th Avenue and Berwyn Road. This building currently serves as the Berwyn Heights Library.
- Laurel Rescue moved from Rowles' Amoco to 201 Little Montgomery Street.

Fire Prevention:

- After much work, the first Fire Code was finally adopted on November 24, 1953, by the County Commissioners.

1954

As in past years, the volunteers purchased new fire equipment and built new fire stations. The fire companies were now operating 119 pieces of equipment which included 33 engine companies, eight truck companies, four Rescue Squad Trucks, and 19 ambulances.[119]

New Equipment:

- Many new pieces were ordered. This included a new 85-foot Peter Pirsch Aerial Ladder Truck for Mount Rainier, a 85-foot American LaFrance Aerial Ladder Truck for Laurel, and a 65-foot Seagrave Aerial Ladder Truck for Boulevard Heights.

Fire Control Board:

- The Capitol Heights Fire Board was closed after 11 years of operation, and moved to the Prince George's County Police Headquarters Building in Seat Pleasant.

New Stations:

- New firehouses were constructed by Berwyn Heights, Bladensburg, Bowie, Branchville, Boulevard Heights, District Heights, Laurel, Riverdale, and Silver Hill.
- Though only recently started, the Chillum-Adelphi Fire Department saw the need for an additional firehouse in the Adelphi area. The company purchased a tract of land on the west side of Riggs Road between Sargeant and Ray Roads, near Chillum Manor. Construction began in 1954 and was completed the following year. Again, like the first firehouse, it was built with volunteer labor and donated materials.[120]

Fire Prevention:

- The Fire Prevention Committee began the establishment of a full-time office for Fire Code Enforcement. They recommended one Fire Marshall, four Fire Inspectors, and one Secretary be hired at a cost of $44,677. The County Board of Commissioners cut this request by 82% to only $8,050. This left enough money for one Fire Marshall and one Secretary. After many meetings and debates, the funds were increased and one additional Fire Inspector was approved. With that, the Bureau of Fire Prevention was on its way.

Cottage City Ladies Auxiliary

The group was organized on January 5, 1954 with 20 charter members. The first officers installed were Ethel Beck, President; Bertha Pincus, Vice President; Micky Duvall, Secretary; and Ruth Berger, Treasurer.

They raised money by catering banquets, wedding receptions, dinners, dances, and bake sales. These funds were used to purchase helmets, new equipment, and furnishings for the firehouse.

1955

The former Greenbelt Public Safety Fire Department was reorganized as a volunteer fire company. The new group used the former department's equipment and station.

A disability benefit program was passed by the State Legislature. It gave volunteer firemen financial protection if they were hurt or killed in the performance of their duties. Amounts ranged from $5 per day for a year to $500 for the coverage of medical bills.

The Department of Fire Protection began enforcement of the County Fire Code. Lawrence Woltz was hired as the first Fire Marshal.

Association News:

- Members of Chillum-Adelphi had a special six-year fire tax approved by the State. With this new revenue, the department hired its first two paid firemen. They worked Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- There were 34 engine companies, eight truck companies, four rescue squad trucks, and 26 ambulances in service throughout the County. This was an increase of 16 pieces since the previous year.
- The Ladies Auxiliary placed in service the Emergency Mobile Canteen Unit No. 1, in March of 1955. The unit was kept at Berwyn Heights until it was transferred in October to Chillum-Adelphi.
- Chapel Oaks tried again to rebuild itself. Under the leadership of Myron Fitzhugh, the members appointed Charles Lancaster, Sr., as Business Manager of the department.

New Equipment:

•Several of the fire companies expanded their fleets during the year. This included two new Cadillac Ambulances for Bladensburg, a used Diamond "T" and a new Cadillac Ambulance for Branchville, a new Pontiac Ambulance for Boulevard Heights, and a new Mack Pumper for Silver Hill.

Fire Control Board:

•During 1955, the Fire Control Board No. 1, located in the County Service Building in Hyattsville, handled 1,078 fire calls, 1,891 ambulance calls and 481 assorted calls for assistance. The Fire Control Board No. 2, located in the Prince George's County Police Headquarters Building, handled 746 fire calls, 1,712 ambulance calls, and 383 assorted calls for assistance.

New Stations:

•With all the new equipment on hand, several companies made plans to expand their firehouses. The Forestville firehouse was completed at a cost of $90,000 in November of 1956.

Department of Fire Prevention:

•Fire Marshall Lawrence Woltz, Inspector Simon Lebowitz, and their secretary Mrs. Suit, were busy during the year. The three worked long hours to enforce the first Fire Code in the County as members of the Department of Fire Prevention.

Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department

This group was formed from the earlier Rescue Squad group and members of the Federal Fire Department. In February 1955, the Federal Government left the Greenbelt Project in the hands of the local residents. The firehouse and equipment were now operated by the volunteers and not the Federal Government. Marshall Zoellner was elected as the first President, and J. Paul Williams as the first Fire Chief.[121]

Brandywine-Aquasco Volunteer Fire Department

The first meeting to organize a fire department in the Brandywine, Baden, and Aquasco area was held on January 31, 1955. Mr. Pete Dorsey, from the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Department, presided over the meeting. Mr. Joseph N. Ridgley Jr., was elected as the temporary President and Mr. Ed Middleton was elected as Secretary.

Three months later, on March 7, 1955, another meeting was held. President Ridgley appointed a committee to locate a site for the construction of the first firehouse. The second and fourth Mondays of each month were announced as the regular meeting nights for the department. On March 28, the financial report of the new company was: Seal $10, Recording Fees $30, Insurance $20, purchase of two used fire engines $2, total expenses were $62, leaving only $49 remaining in the treasury.

One of the fire engines was a used 1939 U.S.A. Pumper purchased from the Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department. On April 24, 1955, Mr. George Curtis reported at a special meeting that the recommended site for the firehouse was in Baden.

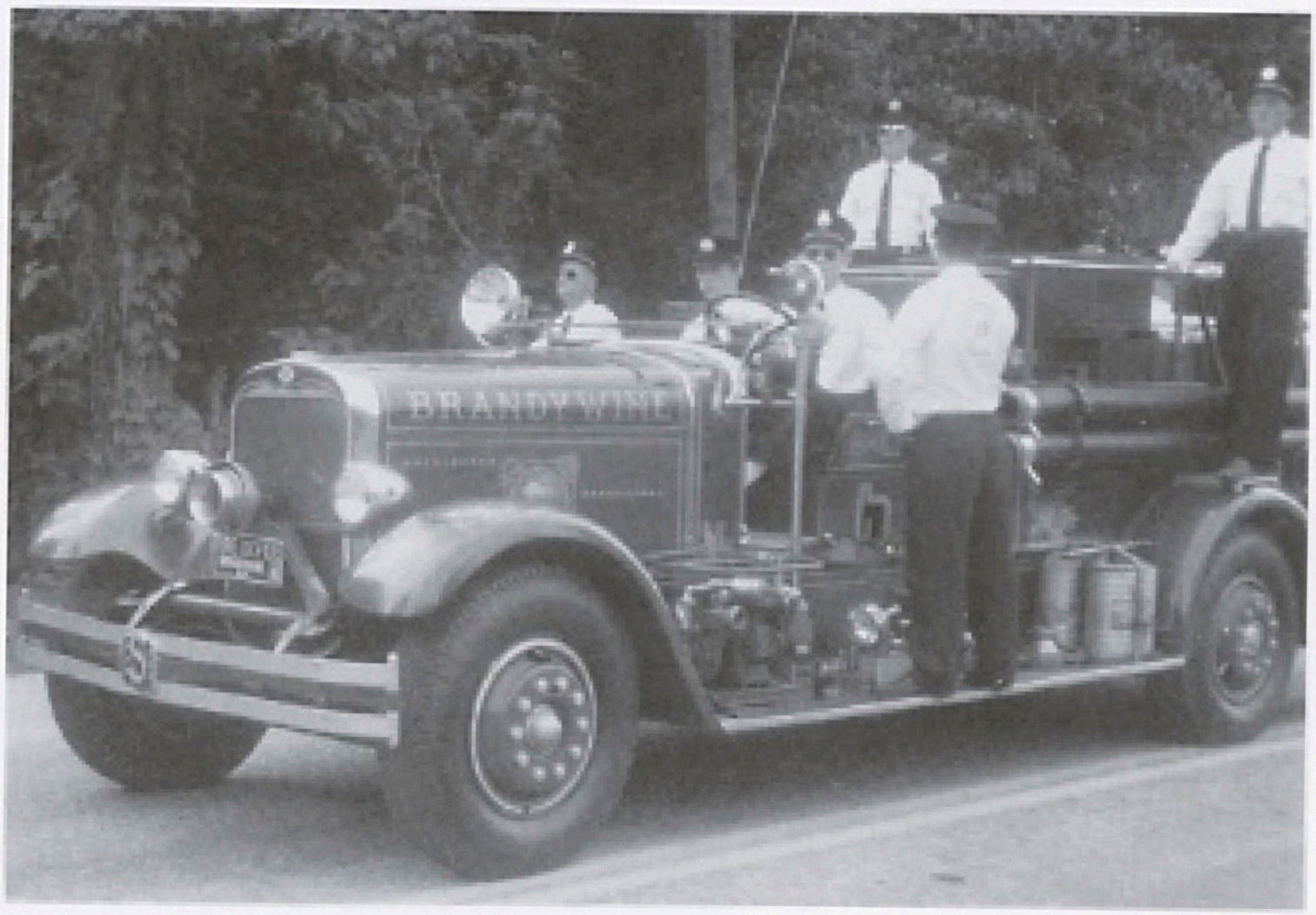
The next month, elections were held for operational and administrative officers. Elected were: W. Burroughs, W. Jowett, Dr. Seron, and W. Thornburg as the Board of Directors; Richard Hohing, Vice-President; O. B. Willet, Treasurer; Bob Molan, Captain; J. F. Summers, 1st Lieutenant; H. J. Lohman, 2nd Lieutenant; Earl Greenfield, Sergeant; W. Teslik, Engineer; and J. Cooke as Assistant Engineer.

On June 22, 1955, a deed of land was presented to the group by Ms. Margaret Carr. The Building and Plans Committee reported they were ready to lay the foundation for the building and began construction of a three-bay engine room with a kitchen in the rear. The entire construction, including cutting, hauling and milling of the lumber, was completed by a host of actively involved members.[122]

Members from the Brandywine area found the location of the new firehouse and the elected officers, not to their liking. They removed themselves from the group and left to start their own fire department.

Brandywine Volunteer Fire Department

Members of this group had helped to organize the Brandywine-Aquasco Volunteer Fire Department earlier in the year. However, after this group decided to place the firehouse in the Baden area, five miles south of Brandywine, they decided to start their own fire company in May 1955.



After separating from the Baden group, the Brandywine Volunteer Fire Department was formed. In September 1955, the firehouse foundation was laid on property donated by retired Prince George's County Police Court Judge, Alan Bowie. Progress was slow during the winter months, and the members enrolled in the University of Maryland Basic Firefighting Course to pass time. [123]

FIRE STATIONS CIRCA 1955 - 1963

1956

Growth of the Volunteer Firemen's Association was stagnated during the late 1950's with no new fire companies being organized. However, their energy was evident with the continued purchases of new equipment and construction of new facilities.

Berwyn Heights was again saddened with the death of another member. On July 12, 1956, John Leyh, while returning from a call in his personal vehicle, lost control on a sharp curve in the Beltsville Agriculture Research Center and struck a tree.

The Brandywine-Aquasco Volunteer Fire Department placed an order for their first new fire engine on February 13, 1956. The first permanent elections were also held, with Willard Beavers elected Chief and William Wiseman, Assistant Chief.

Association News:

- The 34th Annual Convention was hosted by the District Heights Volunteer Fire Department on September 7 and 8, 1956.
- Two new companies were added to the membership: Brandywine-Aquasco (Company 36) and Brandywine (Company 40).
- The Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department changed its charter to reflect its new name.

New Equipment:

- Brandywine ordered their first new pumper. The Culbert Company sold them a 1956 GMC-American Marsh 500 g.p.m. Pumper costing $15,000. When the unit was delayed at the factory, the members purchased a used pumper from Mount Rainier on August 8, 1956.

New Stations:

•Riverdale Heights began the construction of a new firehouse a few short blocks away from the existing station which was opened during 1956.

Communications:

•The Laurel Rescue Squad was selected by the Civil Defense Agency to serve as a alternate command post for Prince George's County. Members constructed a radio room to house the equipment.

Department of Fire Prevention:

•The Department of Fire Prevention expanded with the testing and hiring of four new inspectors. Their starting salary was $3,100.

1957

The 35th Annual Convention was hosted by the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department on September 12, 13 and 14, 1957. No new companies were added to the membership during the year. The County support to the volunteers was increased to $108,000. There were 88 pumpers, 29 ambulances, six squad trucks, eight ladder trucks, six pick-ups, two chief's cars, and five boats in the County.

Chapel Oaks was still attempting to get on its feet. During 1957, they purchased a new FWD 1000 g.p.m. Pumper and Charles Lancaster, Sr., donated a parcel of land at 5412 Sheriff Road for construction of a new two-bay firehouse.

Cheltenham Navy Communications Fire Department

Located in the southern end of the County, this federal facility has been around since 1939. There are no early records of a fire department on the base. It is assumed fire protection was provided by military personnel assigned to the base with a hand-drawn hose reel and numerous hand extinguishers. The responding enlisted personnel were most likely under the charge of a Chief Petty Officer.

The first record of full-time, paid fire protection came in January 1957. A Fire Chief was hired, he worked six-days a week maintaining the apparatus, performing fire prevention inspections, and drilling the military personnel in fire fighting. At the time, their were two pieces of apparatus, a Ford and an International. Log book entries show these units were usually out of service with mechanical problems.[124]

1958

Another volunteer died in the line of duty during the year. Volunteer Chief William Wells, of District Heights, died on September 10, 1958.

Branchville purchased the famous Riverdale "Postage Stamp" Mack. A loan of $30,000 was arranged with Suburban Bank to pay for the pumper and the Burris property adjacent to the firehouse.

Hyattsville broke ground on November 22, 1958, for their new station at Queensbury and Queens Chapel. Oxon Hill expanded their firehouse with the construction of bunkrooms, recreation areas, storage space, and a large kitchen area. Silver Hill began looking into building a second station; this idea was killed after area residents protested the construction in their area.

1959

The issue of a County Fire Department was raised by the Yarger and Associates "Fire Protection Survey Report." The report was presented to the County Commissioners during 1959. Concerns over tax money distribution to the volunteer companies led to the report. At the time, there were 40 fire stations in the County staffed by 1,367 active volunteers, 63 full-time paid firefighters, and 12 part-time firefighters—17 of the full-time personnel were in Hyattsville.

The firefighters were employees of the individual fire companies, and as such were subject to varying pay scales, benefits, and conditions of employment. Because of the varying conditions, firefighters would move from station to station as conditions changed. The Yarger Study indicated in the previous year, there were 530 fire emergencies to which fire stations did not respond. Most of these responses, 408 or 80%, occurred between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The study recommended:

•At least two paid firefighters at each station
•All firefighters should be employees of the County
•A unified command structure should be developed under a County Fire Chief
•The consolidation of fire communications and fire prevention under the County Fire Chief[125]

This year again saw the death of another firefighter. Volunteer Fire Fighter James A. Melton, of Branchville, died from a heart attack suffered on a fireground on November 30, 1959.

Residents of Capitol Heights and the surrounding areas watched as the Ford Lumber Company burned to the ground during the year. Assistant Chief Joseph LiCalzi called for a general alarm, which brought units from throughout the County.

Association News:

•The third paid fireman was hired by Mount Rainier.
•College Park began the practice of hiring student members to serve as full-time firefighters during the University's summer vacation. This program was later expanded to cover all University vacation periods.

New Stations:

•Hyattsville opened its second station on July 4, 1959, at Queens Chapel and Queensbury Road and was listed as Station 41.
•Kentland opened a new fire station on Landover Road. From their original firehouse and equipment to the new firehouse and three relatively new fire engines, the young company had come a long way.

1960

As the new decade started, the Association looked at the past, present and future of fire protection in the County. From the initial eight companies and 125 volunteers, they had grown to 35 companies and over 2,100 volunteer firefighters. Most of the companies were against the Yarger Study released the previous year. They felt that adoption of the recommendations would be the downfall of the volunteer fire service. The issues were on everyones minds over the next 10 years as dramatic changes occurred within the County.

Tragedy struck when Riverdale Heights Volunteer Fire Fighter Gerald Britton died from injuries suffered during a live-fire training exercise.

Several major fires occurred during the year. The most expensive fire was at the West Lanham Elementary School. A fire set by vandals spread rapidly throughout the building. Neighbors reported the fire when flames broke through the roof. Damage was estimated at $185,244. As a footnote to this incident, Fire Marshal Woltz drafted recommendations on the use of non-cumbustable ceiling materials in schools. These were eventually adopted nationally. The second fire was at the College Park Bowling Alley on June 14, 1960. Fire originating in a grease duct, spread into the bowling pin storage room and the ceiling causing over $170,000 in damage.

Another major fire was at the Southern Maryland Oxygen Company, located at 2900 52nd Avenue, on March 16, 1960. An explosion sent flames 300 feet into the air bringing equipment from throughout the County to battle the five alarm. Damage was estimated at $150,000.

Association News:

- There were 109 pumpers, 10 ladder trucks, 5 squad trucks, 6 boats, 8 chief's cars, 25 utility trucks, 1 tanker, 1 bus and 1 amphibious duck in service.
- Forestville joined the ranks of stations employing paid firefighters, when they hired their first in October 1960.

New Equipment:

- Hyattsville sent it's Squad Truck, without the body, back to American LaFrance to be rebuilt into a pumper. The squad body was sold to the West Lanham Hills Volunteer Fire Department.

Fire Control Board:

•The Fire Control Board dispatched over 22,000 calls for assistance during the year.

New Stations:

•The Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department constructed a new firehouse on Crescent Road, which was completed in September 1960.

•Four other companies requested approval from the Association to construct sub-stations. These were: Chillum-Adelphi, Bladensburg, Laurel and Bowie. Approval was granted by the Association for Laurel and Bowie's request.

1961

An attempt was made by the Association, during the year, to install seatbelts on all fire apparatus for use by the driver and officer. The motion lost in a vote of the membership during the convention.

The year was especially bad for fire related deaths. Sixteen people died as a result of fire, the largest fire related loss of life in over seven years.

Association News:

•Baden-Aquasco officially changed their name to the Baden Volunteer Fire Department.

•More paid firefighters were hired in the County by the volunteer companies. This included two in Bladensburg, two in Tuxedo-Cheverly, and one in Boulevard Heights. The Bladensburg men were paid for through financial assistance from the town.

•Silver Hill was busy during the year lobbying on Capitol Hill for the title to the land in Suitland. A bill was introduced by Senator Butler and Congressman Lankford during the 87th Congress to grant the land to the Fire Department.

New Equipment:

•Kentland placed a Buick Ambulance in service.

New Stations:

•Accokeek began construction on July 4, 1961, for a new firehouse.

Fire Control Board:

•The Fire Control Board handled over 27,000 calls for assistance during the year. In addition, they were busy installing and testing the new 33.74 radio frequency.

1962

Large fires again burned in the County. The largest fire for the year was on April 11, 1962, at the CO-OP Food Supermarket in Greenbelt. An overhead fluorescent light ballast ignited on the ceiling. The burning ceiling fell onto the store stock, and within a short time, the roof collapsed. Ten fire companies took over 12 hours to extinguish the blaze. The loss was estimated at over $557,000. This was the highest recorded dollar loss fire in the County, since the volunteer fire departments started keeping records.

Another large fire was at the Suitland Junior High School on July 14, 1962. A fire of suspicious origin started in the home economics kitchen. Ceiling tiles and long open hallways allowed the fire to build up intense heat and travel several hundred feet down the hall before firemen could contain it. Damage was estimated at $145,000.

Clair Loughmiller, Sr., President of the Association, reported on four areas he thought could be improved. These ranged from the issue of paid firefighters to more tax money for the volunteer companies. First, he wanted to establish a pension plan for the volunteers. Secondly, he felt paid firemen should be hired in greater numbers, and by more companies in order to maintain the best in fire protection on a 24-hour basis. He wanted the Association to take a more active part in helping member companies get paid firefighters, and the benefits and working conditions should be standardized throughout the County and in-line with those of paid firefighters in surrounding areas. There were 29 paid men in the County during 1962, with more in sight. Thirdly, he saw the need for more equitable financing of the member companies. The $12,000 subsidy for low income department improved conditions, but didn't solve them. And finally, the establishment of a separate building for the Fire Headquarters. [126]

Association News:

•Brentwood joined the ranks of departments with paid personnel, with the hiring of their first.

New Equipment:

•Hyattsville bought the first 100-foot ladder truck in the County. An American LaFrance Tiller Truck replaced the older 65-foot ladder truck.

New Stations:

•Oxon Hill opened a sub-station in the Glassmanor area. It was assigned Company Number 42.

Department of Fire Prevention:

•The Fire Code was modified to add fire lane parking regulations and control of open air burning.

•The Fire Marshal's Office handled over 1,314 inspections, 875 investigations, 223 complaints, 328 plans reviewed, 14 court cases, 124 fire prevention demonstrations, 223 meetings with builders, and 392 assorted details. This was completed by a staff of six inspectors, two administrative personnel, and one Fire Marshal. The office staff consisted of: Fire Marshal Lawrence R. Woltz, Inspector Glenn W. Moore, Inspector Sherman B. Durbin, Inspector Stephen A. White, Jr., Inspector Harry R. Webster, Inspector William J. Wise, Jr., Inspector Warren Peter, Secretary Hilda Suit, and Clerk May Frances Wiser.[134]

1963

Another fireman was killed in 1963, members of Tuxedo-Cheverly suffered the loss. Volunteer Fire Fighter Dennis M. Boswell died on November 23, 1963, when he was struck by a drunk driver while fighting a fire at 64th and Sheriff Road.

Silver Hill's long battle for the property title from the federal government ended on October 23, 1963. President Kennedy signed House Resolution 7781, into Public Law 87-848. This deeded the property in question to the Silver Hill Volunteer Fire Department.

1964

Oxon Hill joined the ranks of departments with paid personnel with the hiring of their first paid firefighter during the year. Bladensburg hired a third paid firefighter. Because of varying levels of development in the County, great inequities developed in the fire tax monies available to the fire companies. For example, in 1964, one fire company received $58,445, while Chapel Oaks received only $1,773.

Ritchie Volunteer Fire Department

The Ritchie Volunteer Fire Department was officially incorporated on October 5, 1964. In November, Mr. Alton P. Nicholson donated a parcel of land to the department in the area known as Ritchie Triangle. Shortly afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Ritchie donated an adjoining lot.

The Park and Planning Commission repeatedly refused to grant a building permit to the department for various reasons. For the next three years, the company worked hard to get approval for the new fire station.[127]

1965

The County fire protection budget reached over $300,000. This included $145,000 for the volunteer fire departments. Additional funds totalling $160,000, were allocated for the staffing of each volunteer station with two career firefighters.[128]

Firefighters in the County were busy battling a rash of apartment fires. The County was growing rapidly, and developers were constructing "garden style" apartment buildings throughout the area. This new style of building forced the fire companies to develop new firefighting tactics to combat the quick burning buildings. Many of the fires occurred while the apartment complexes were being built. This included:

- The Potomac Heights Apartments on April 2 and May 21, 1965. Under construction at 7061 Palmer Road, these fires caused over $480,000 in damage.
- The Cherry Hill Apartments on April 6, 1965. Under construction in the 4000 block of Warner Avenue, the fire caused $200,000 in damage.
- The Springhill Lake Apartments on April 22 and 23, 1965. Under construction, these two fires caused $200,000 in damage.
- Landon Court Apartments on June 26, 1965. Under construction in the 3500 block of Hamilton Street, the fire caused $50,000 in damage.

Two other large fires occurred in Brentwood and Marlboro. The Brentwood fire happened on May 20, 1965, around 9:45 p.m. at the Dieners Warehouse on Rhode Island Avenue. Three-alarms, and three special alarms were struck. Damage totaled over $700,000. A two-alarm fire occurred in Marlboro at the Lumber Warehouse on December 23, 1965, causing over $150,000 in damage.

Association News:

- Additional paid personnel were hired by the various volunteer companies. These included: a fourth for Bladensburg, the first for Berwyn Heights, and the second for Boulevard Heights. The Berwyn Heights firefighter was hired at a salary of $4,200 a year for a five-day, 50-hour work week.

Fire Control Board:

- The Fire Board had a budget of $136,119 and handled over 36,327 calls during the year.
- The Fire Board *"lost"* one of its dispatchers, Marion H. Estepp, who became a Fire Inspector on August 9, 1965.

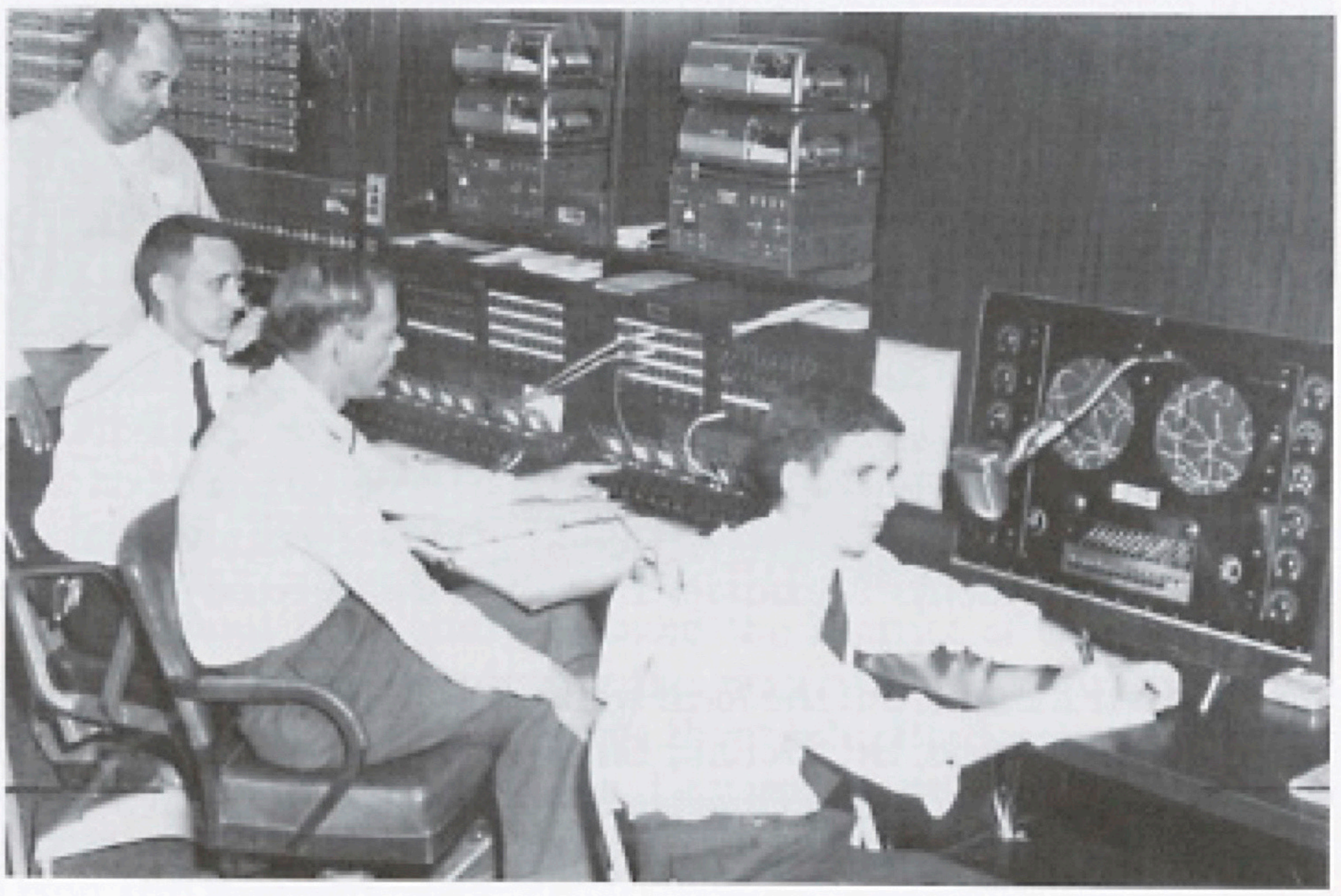
New Stations:

- Bowie opened a new firehouse in the Belair section of town in September 1965. No sooner had this station opened, then the volunteers began plans to open a third station in the area around Pointer Ridge.

Department of Fire Prevention:

- The Fire Marshal's office had an allotment of $92,682. During the year, they handled more than 4,139 fire safety inspections, 673 routine fire investigations, 309 complaints and 44 court cases.
- William N. Stehle, a Fire Protection Engineer, was hired on August 9, 1965, by the Department of Buildings and Inspections to review building plans for fire safety.
- Police Captain Earl J. Huber, Prince George's County Police Department, was assigned special duty in the Fire Marshal's Office to conduct criminal investigations.
- Michael R. Granados was appointed as a Fire Inspector.
- Fire deaths in the County reached a high of 27, with 11 being children under 12 years of age.

1966



During the late 1960's, the fire service in the County was undergoing constant change. Not everyone was in favor of the changes, many of the volunteers felt they would loose money and control of the fire stations. Others felt a County-wide system would lead to volunteer fire stations being closed and replaced with career fire stations. County Officials tried to calm the concerns. They pressed the issues that a combined system would save the taxpayers money and provide better service through a combined career and volunteer system. The arguments, name calling, and feuding continued for the next four years. Each side was determined to win when the vote was held for the proposed Charter.

The Fire Board reported having handled over 40,268 calls during the year. Personnel actions in the County during the year included; Heubert J. Crisman appointed as a Fire Inspector, Earl Huber retired from the Police Department and was hired as a Fire Investigator. Warren Peter and Stephen A. White, Jr., transferred to the firefighting division of Prince George's County. Warren Peter being hired by Glenn Dale as their first contract fireman.

January was a rough month for firefighters in the County. Over a two day period from January 30th to 31st, three multi-alarm fires caused over $620,000 in damage. Firemen were hampered by blizzard conditions and heavy snowfall.

The first fire occurred on January 30, at 5:30 p.m., at 5122 South Barnaby Road. Two-alarms were sounded for the house fire which caused $65,000 in damage. The second fire occurred two hours later at 3512 Silver Park Drive. Four-alarms were sounded for the apartment fire which injured seven firemen, one civilian and caused $235,000 in damage. The third fire occurred on the 31st at 1:36 p.m., at the Bowie Race Track. Two stables containing 40 horses were destroyed. Losses were estimated at $336,000.

Another apartment fire occurred on July 7, 1966, at 10:57 p.m. at 3621 Gallatin Street. This three-alarm fire injured five firemen and caused an estimated $125,000 in damage.

Prince George's County Professional Fire Fighter's Association, Local 1619

By the mid 1960's, firefighters were working as contract employees for individual local volunteer fire companies. There were no set standards for firefighters. Each fire company had its own salary scale, working hours and working conditions. Many firefighters worked 70 hour work weeks while receiving only 40 hours of pay. It was common practice for employees to quit one company and go to another for more money or fewer hours. Most companies provided no hospitalization, life insurance, retirement plans, or other benefits.

In March 1966, the Prince George's County Government began to establish paid firefighters under the County Government Merit System, absorbing those who were already employed as paid men either by the volunteer companies or through the fire tax.

John Sansbury and Tex Beardmore met, with Larry Beardmore of the District Fire Department, Local 36, to discuss forming a union. After many phone calls and much discussion, a meeting was held on April 25, 1966, to decide on forming a union local. The majority of those at the meeting voted in favor of the idea and elected John Sansbury as temporary President. Alexander Hamilton was elected as the first President on June 7, 1966.

Charter members of the local were: John Sansbury, Jr., Alexander Hamilton, James Holder, John Woods, Sr., Donald Eireman, Jr., Frank Burqutte, James Atkinson, James Enis, William Beardmore, Charles E. Woods, Sr., Herman J. Stoll, Thomas Coe, Warren Peter, Robert Gover, Charles Brown, Edward Chaney, and F. E. Stebbing, Jr.[129]

1967

The County started the Fire Training Division on January 1, 1967. Harold Richman was appointed the first Fire Training Coordinator. The division provided training for all firefighters, paid and volunteer, with the fire companies. One of the early moves was to

establish a Riot Operations Plan. On July 25, 1967, through the work of the volunteers and County officials, it was placed in effect.

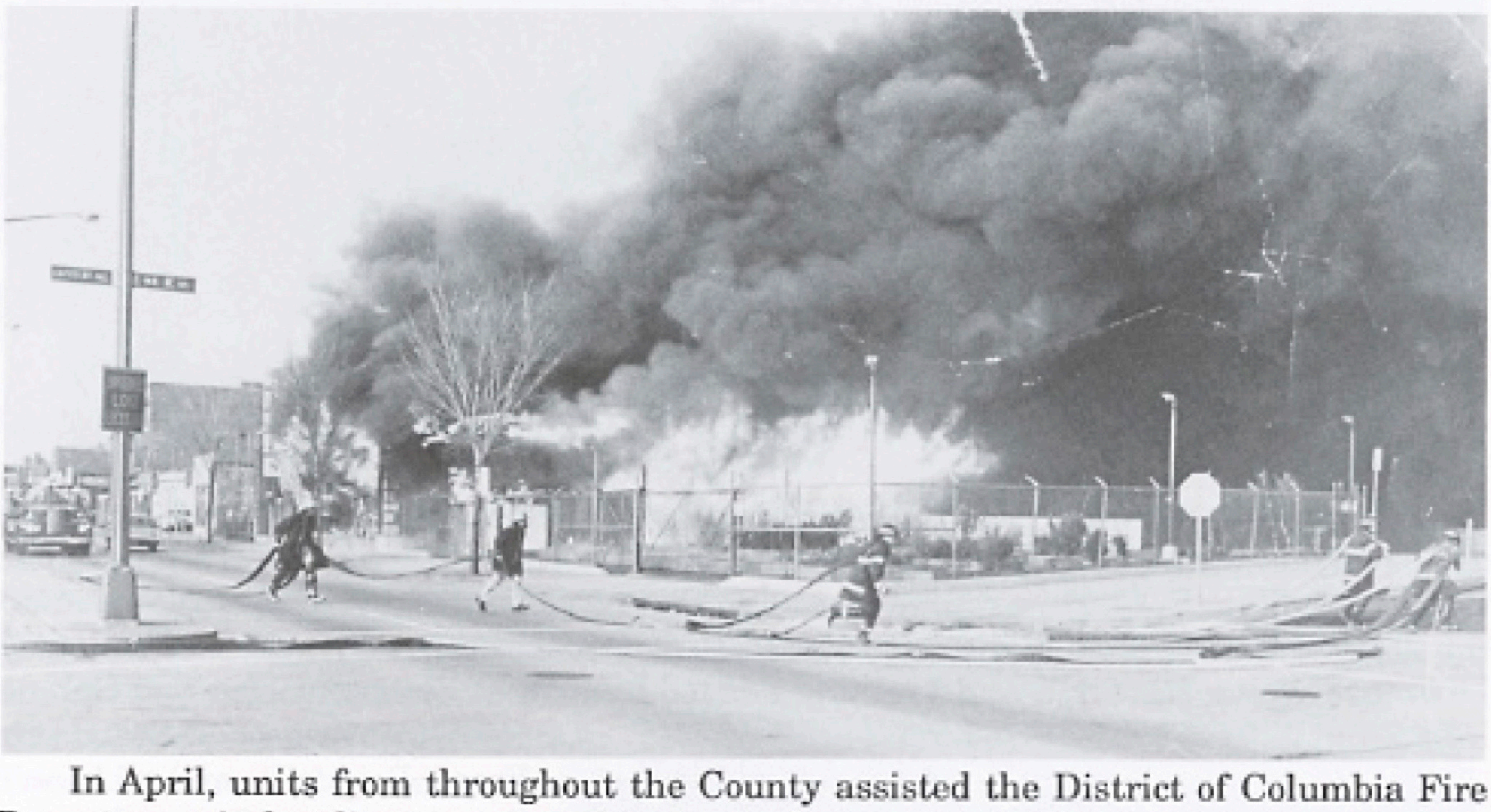
The Fire Department budgets increased to over $1.9 million. A new Fire Prevention Code was adopted by the Board of Commissioners. It was based on the American Insurance Association Fire Prevention Code.

Under an agreement with the County, the paid firefighters, employed by Hyattsville were made County employees, with the city paying half of their salaries. Seat Pleasant hired two additional paid personnel, which were later absorbed by the County.

Philip E. Tierney, of Boulevard Heights, died in the line of duty from a heart attack, on June 16, 1967, while fighting a fire in District Heights.

The group from Ritchie finally saw the end to their problems in establishment of the fire company, when on June 10, 1967, they placed the fire station in service. The first engine was a used 1951 Seagrave Pumper purchased from Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department. A second engine, a 1953 Federal, was later purchased from the Federal Government for $300.

1968



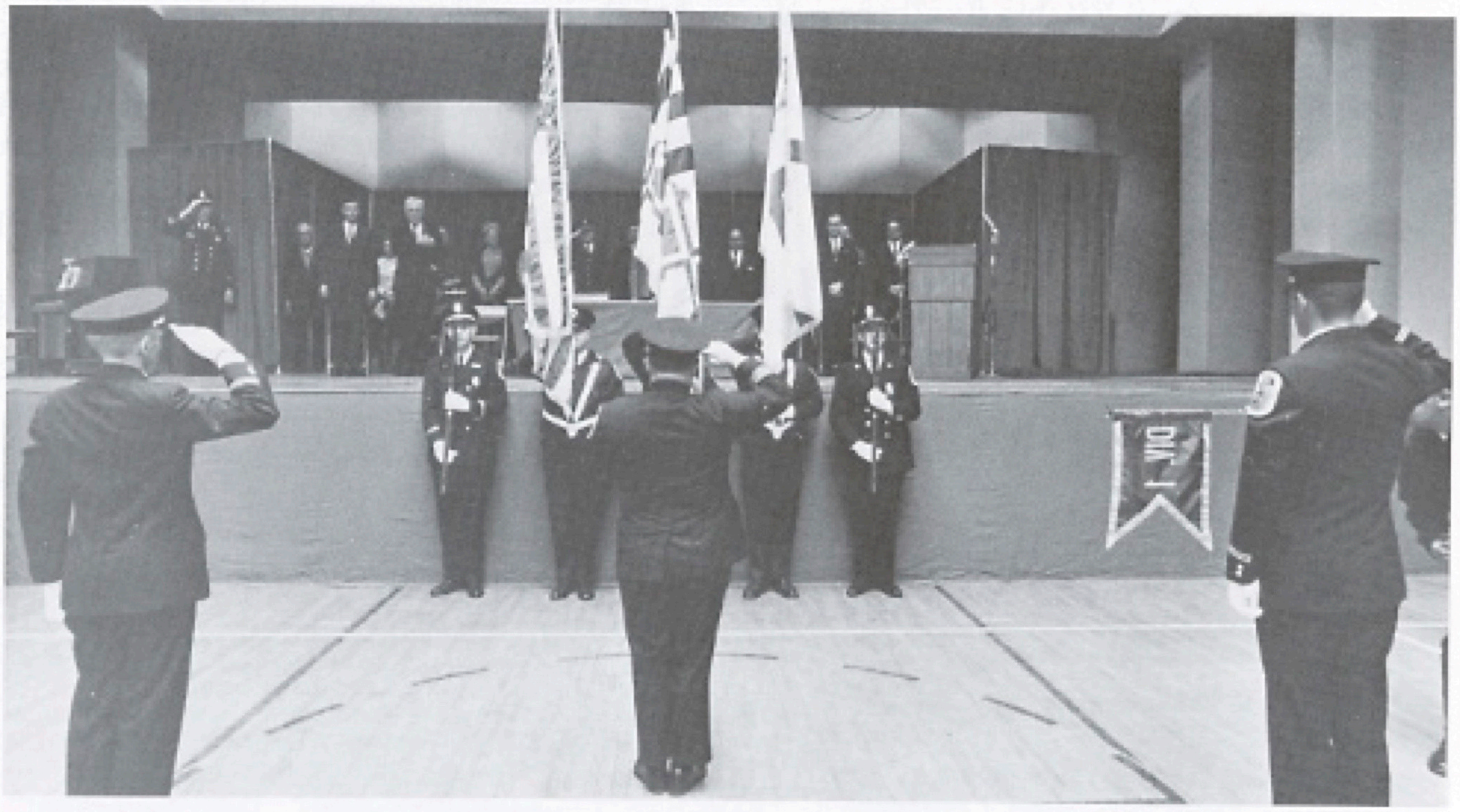
In April, units from throughout the County assisted the District of Columbia Fire Department in battling numerous blazes set during the riots. Over 200 firemen from Hyattsville, Cottage City, Mount Rainier, Brentwood, Riverdale, Bladensburg, College Park, Berwyn Heights, Tuxedo-Cheverly, Forestville, Clinton, Morningside, West Lanham Hills, Silver Hill, Landover Hills, Beltsville, Allentown Road, Chillum-Adelphi, Greenbelt, Bowie, and Oxon Hill assisted.[130]

Large fires also burned in the County during the year. On January 12, a three-alarm fire burned through the apartments at 1903 Brooks Drive, causing $130,000 in damage. The second large fire occurred on October 27, in a restaurant at Route 214 and Route 301 causing over $225,000 in damage. A three-alarm fire in a carpet warehouse at 4700 St. Barnabas Road, burned on November 11, causing $200,000 in damage.

New Equipment:

- There were 106 engines, 16 ladder trucks, seven squads, and 57 ambulances in service.
- Glenn Dale hired two additional paid firemen, bringing the total to three firefighters on duty during the day.
- Marlboro became interested in operating a truck company. In May, they purchased a used 1939 American LaFrance 100-foot Aerial Ladder Truck from the Water Witch Company in Annapolis. The unit ran its first call on July 30, 1968. In November, a Ford Tractor was purchased to replace the original American LaFrance Tractor.

Department of Fire Protection



On June 14, 1968, the Department of Fire Protection was established as the consolidating agency for the career personnel who provided fire/rescue related services in the County. William E. Clark, a retired Battalion Chief from New York City, was appointed the first Director of the department. The existing Department of Prevention headed by Lawrence Woltz; Research and Training headed by Harold Richman; Fire and Rescue Communications headed by Frank Briguglio, and all career fire station personnel were included in the organization. The incumbent paid personnel employed by the volunteer companies were given the first chance at applying for the new County positions. The first combined budget for the volunteer and career force was over $4.7 millon dollars.

The Department of Fire Protection held its first formal review and ceremony at Ritchie Coliseum on November 11, 1968. The first Career Sergeant's Exam and Officer Candidate School was held. Thirty-eight Fire Sergeants were placed in the field.[131]

1969

The fight over the proposed Charter continued. The volunteers felt that volunteer fire departments would cease operations if the Charter were approved. The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission recommended in a report the general locations for 10 future fire and rescue stations, and the relocation of two existing companies. New stations were recommended for West Laurel, South Laurel, Beltsville, Lanham, Bowie, Largo, Temple Hills, Marlton, Woodmore, and the South Potomac area. Recommended for relocation were Bowie Company 19 and Landover Hills Company 30.

Several promotions were made in the Career Department. Bureau Chief Lawrence Woltz, was appointed acting Deputy Director of the Department of Fire Protection in August 1969. Glenn W. Moore was appointed Acting Chief of the Bureau of Fire Prevention. The year saw 13 deaths and fire damage estimated at over $3.7 million. The Bureau of Research and Training completed a training manual with 300 slides, 100 transparencies and over 300 photographs.

This year saw two members of Chillum-Adelphi die in the line of duty on August 10, 1969. Volunteer Fire Fighter Robert J. Harmon, Jr., and Volunteer Fire Fighter Charles Robert Hobstetter lost their lives while attempting a water rescue. A family had become stranded on the bridge on New Hampshire Avenue at Sligo Creek Parkway by high water. The two firefighters entered the four-foot deep current, with lifelines, to attempt the rescue. They both lost their footing and were swept away in the flood waters.

1970

The County Fire Budget reached $5.4 million dollars. There were 112 engines, 21 ladder trucks, seven squads, and 47 ambulances in service. Career firefighters, numbering 249, were assigned to the 44 fire stations and helped respond to over 52,687 calls. Captain John Fuston was promoted to Acting Chief of the Bureau of Research and Training on July 1, 1970.

It was a busy year for the volunteers. Several companies bought new equipment or expanded their quarters. Glenn Dale purchased a 1970 Sutphen 85-foot Aerial Platform, while Mount Rainier purchased a 100-foot Aerial Tiller Truck and built a new addition on the station. Bowie opened Station 43 in the Pointer Ridge area, and Kentland opened Station 46 in Largo.

Student demonstrations at the University of Maryland in the spring caused the frequent abandonment of College Park's station. Many times, the fire company moved to the Fire Service Training Area where facilities were available for men and equipment. There, they were joined by task forces of two pumpers and a ladder truck from other companies to handle the rash of set fires on campus. This procedure was repeated each spring for the next two years.

The Charter form of government was passed by the voters in November 1970. Soon afterwards, the new combined County Fire Department was started.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE STATIONS- MID SIXTIES THROUGH THE MID SEVENTIES

Chapter Three

THE COMBINATION FIRE DEPARTMENT YEARS 1971

Prince George's County Fire Department

The advent of Charter Government in Prince George's County brought basic changes to the structure of many County departments and agencies. As created by the Charter, the new Prince George's County Fire Department was geared to promoting a closer cooperation between the 300 career firefighters, and the 1,000 active volunteer firefighters.

The County Fire Department was composed of several bureaus, directly responsible to the Fire Chief. Department offices were located at the County Services Building in Hyattsville. The first Fire Chief was Acting County Fire Chief Lawrence Woltz.

Though not organized as a seperate bureau, over 200 career firefighters staffed the 45 fire and rescue stations of the County's 37 volunteer fire companies.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention was headed by s Fire Marshal. Fire Marshal M. H. (Jim) Estepp was responsible for enforcement of local laws and codes dealing with handling and storage of flammable or explosive materials, construction of homes and buildings for maximum fire protection, and encouraging the installation of the most modern and efficient automatic fire protection equipment available. Inspection of private homes, as well as schools, businesses, churches, and other public gathering places on a regular basis is one of the primary methods of preventing fires. Another important tool in preventing fires is learning what causes them. While some post-fire investigations are made on suspicion of arson or other negligent acts, many more aid firefighters in developing new techniques and materials for preventing accidental fires.

The Bureau of Fire and Rescue Communications was headed by Bureau Chief Frank Briguglio, who was responsible for the complex fire communications network located in Hyattsville, which handled over 50,000 calls a year. The Bureau of Research and Training was headed by Bureau Chief John T. Fuston who was responsible for training all County firefighters, career and volunteer. The Bureau worked closely with the Fire Extension Service at the University of Maryland to administer programs designed to make County firefighters the best trained in the metropolitan area.

Volunteer Fire Commission

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in the structure of the County Fire Service revolved around the new nine-member Volunteer Fire Commission, established by the Charter.

The Commission members were elected by the volunteer fire companies on an annual basis. They reviewed the financial needs and requests for public funds of each volunteer company. Following its annual review, the Commission compiled a capital budget, capital improvement plan, and current expense budget, combining the request of the various volunteer fire companies and submitting them along with justifications and recommendations to the County Executive. The Commission's Fire Budget was then presented for final approval to the Council by the County Executive as part of the overall budget.

Members of the first Fire Commission were: Mr. Aubrey Schultz, Mr. Phil Carr, Mr. Joseph Robison, Mr. Robert Williams, Mr. Paul Fowler, Mr. Ramon Granados, Mr. Charles Burton, Mr. James Dorsey and Mr. Frank Aceto.

Association News:

- The first firefighter line-of-duty deaths, during the new era occurred on October 23, 1971, when Volunteer Fire Fighters Richard L. Whittington and James A. Herbert were killed when their fire engine overturned enroute to a call.

New Equipment:

- College Park bought a Peter-Pirsch 100' Aerial Ladder Truck; Glenn Dale purchased a Sutphen 85' Aerial Platform Truck; and Boulevard Heights purchased a Seagrave 100' Tiller Ladder Truck.
- Oxon Hill placed in service two Peter-Pirsch Engines for Station 21, and two Peter-Pirsch engines for Station 42.

New Stations:

- Bowie opened a third firehouse, Station 43, in the Pointer Ridge area of Bowie, while Kentland opened Station 46, in the Largo area.
- Beltsville began looking to establish a new fire station in the Calverton area. On June 1, 1970, Mr. Turner, the developer of Calverton, permitted the fire company to house a fire engine in a portion of his warehouse on Beltsville Drive. Though originally a temporary solution, it was three years before a new station would be constructed.

1972

Two volunteer firefighters died in the line-of-duty during the year. The first, Volunteer Fire Fighter Charles R. Hofman, of Tuxedo-Cheverly, died while felling a tree on August 6, 1972. The second, Volunteer Fire Marshal George "Buster" Duvall III, of Cottage City, died on December 11, 1972, from injuries sustained on November 23, 1972. On that date, he was serving as the officer of Squad 2, when it collided with a train at Baltimore Avenue and Decatur Street, critically injuring him.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention was busy during the year handling two large construction projects in the County. In December, Landover Mall and the Capital Centre were opened. During construction, New Life Safety Codes were developed under the direction of Fire Marshal Estepp, to address these issues. Members of the Bureau at the time included: Fire Marshal Estepp, Captain William Wise, Sergeant Klem, Sergeant Goodwin, Sergeant Dennison, Sergeant Stanley, Sergeant Beall, Sergeant Bradburn, Fire Inspector Dobbin, Fire Inspector Collins, Fire Inspector Tyson, Fire Inspector Brinkley, Fire Inspector Cooksey, and Fire Inspector DeVincenso. The Department was also given authority, during the year, to begin enforcement of the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Codes.

The differences between the County Fire Department and the volunteers continued during the year. An article in the *Washington Post* on August 25,1972 described the issue.

FIRE FEUD IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

"All paid firemen have been pulled out of two Prince George's County volunteer stations after one of the professionals came close to physical harm in what his colleagues claim was a deliberate attack by the volunteers. In addition, a professional sergeant's records and equipment were vandalized.

The professional firefighters hired to man the County's 37 companies during weekdays, while most of the volunteers are at their jobs, feel the incidents this week are the latest escalation of the volunteer's fight against County control.

A spokesman for the volunteers said he did not know specifically what was going on, but agreed, "there obviously is some conflict."

The incidents this week are the latest result of a simmering dispute in Prince George's involving fire service.

Over the last several years, the County government has attempted to exercise some control over the County's 37 volunteer companies, which have operated in the past as independent corporations.

Trouble developed when the County's new charter form of government—opposed by the volunteer organizations—provided that the volunteer companies had to get financing through the County government.

Now, the volunteer companies must submit budgets like any government agency for approval. In the first year of this requirement, 18 of the companies refused to submit budget requests, claiming that their failure to do so kept them from County control..."[132]

Local 1619:

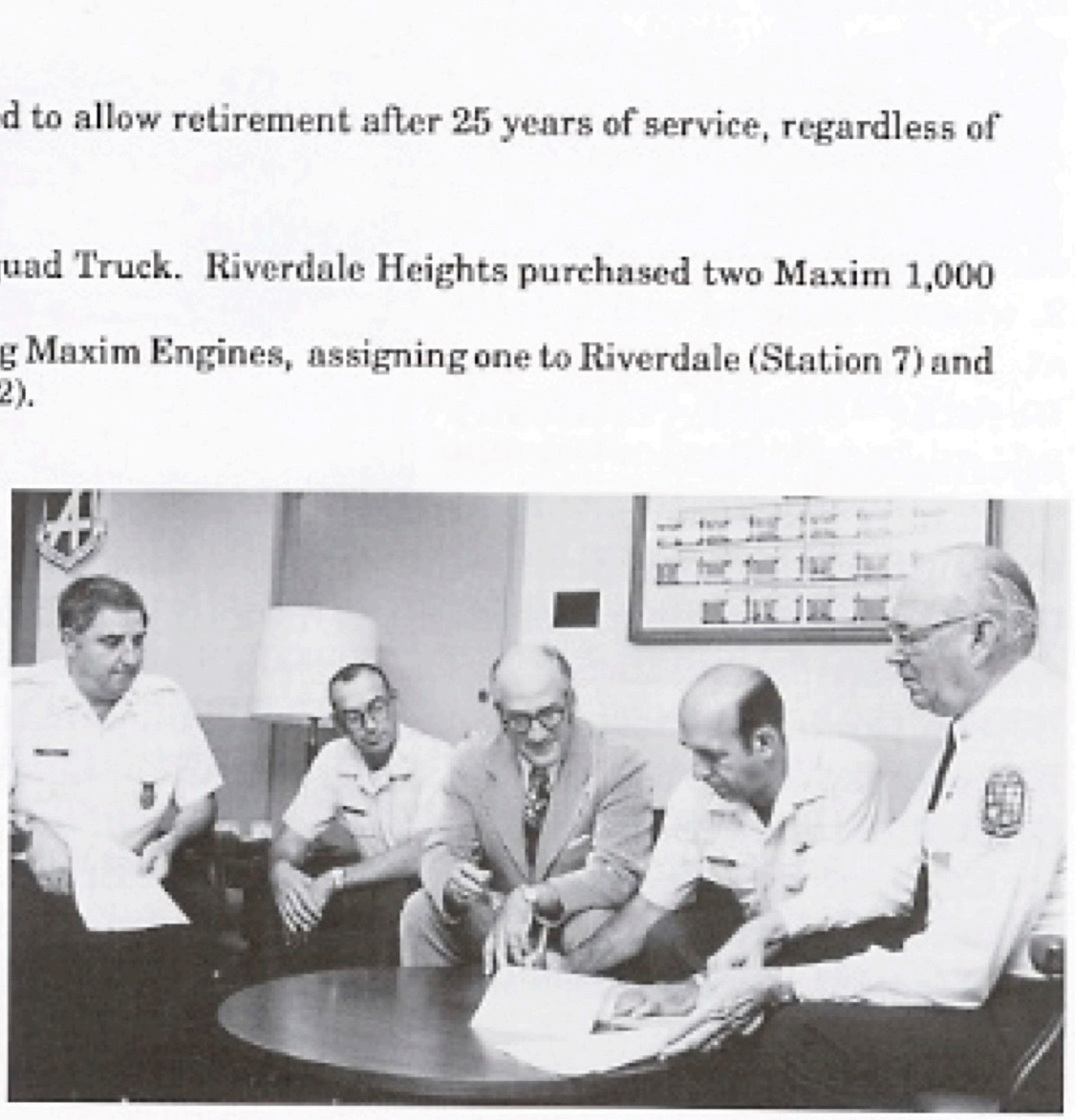
- The retirement system was changed to allow retirement after 25 years of service, regardless of age.

New Equipment:

- Cottage City bought a Seagrave Squad Truck. Riverdale Heights purchased two Maxim 1,000 gpm Engines.
- The County purchased two matching Maxim Engines, assigning one to Riverdale (Station 7) and one to Allentown Road (Station 32).

1973

A great tragedy occurred on July 10, 1973, when three members of the Baden Volunteer Fire Department died in the line-of-duty, in the same accident. On a dark and rainy night, Volunteer Fire Fighters Dennis M. Mandragos, Mark W. Van Tassel, and Richard W. Myers were members of an ambulance crew



transporting a patient to the hospital. Enroute, the ambulance collided with the Baden fire engine on a sharp curve, killing all three instantly.

Beginning in the mid 1970's, the County Fire Department began to slowly change in both organizational content and technological abilities. The first new unit created was the Fire Investigations Special Hazards Unit, or F.I.S.H. Van, it was equipped with an array of bomb disposal and hazardous chemical detection equipment. Another innovation was the establishment of the Major Operations Duty Squad, or "MOD Squad," as it was often called. Members of the unit had completed specialized training in fire prevention, investigations and other specialized subjects. They responded when a saturation of manpower was needed on a short notice.

Prince George's County Fire Department

- Prince George's County became the first jurisdiction in the State of Maryland to implement the "911 Emergency Reporting System." This gave citizens the ability to dial "911" to request police, fire, or ambulance service.[133]
- During late 1973, the career force had a competitive examination to fill 12 Captain and 15 Lieutenant positions. Until this, the highest career rank in fire suppression was a Sergeant, who was supervised by the local volunteer chief. The next level of control was the County Fire Chief. Often the volunteer chief worked a full-time job and was unavailable to provide day-to-day

supervision of the career firefighters. As a temporary measure, a Battalion Liaison Officer Program was started to observe actions in the field.

- The six battalions were each assigned a captain as a Battalion Officer. They were directed to coordinate the efforts of all companies within their respective battalions and to work with the volunteer chiefs to provide day-to-day supervision and control of the station personnel. In addition, one captain was assigned to each battalion at a truck company to act as back-up battalion officer, lieutenants were also assigned to stations with truck companies. The first Battalion Commanders were: 1st Battalion, Captain Walter S. Lanier; 2nd Battalion, Captain Edward E. Chaney; 3rd Battalion, Captain Wallace Casey; 4th Battalion, Captain Thomas Lanier; 5th Battalion, Captain Bert Shaffner; and the 6th Battalion, Captain Warren E. Peter.
- Fire Prevention Captains were: Captain Ward Caddington, Captain Rafael Nieves, Captain William Goodwin, Captain Thomas and Captain Klien.

New Equipment:

- Marlboro purchased a Ford-Oren 1,000 gpm Engine. Clinton purchased a Maxim 1,250 gpm Engine.

New Stations:

- On February 15, 1973, the County erected a temporary fire station in Calverton for Station 41, using temporary school rooms next to Calverton Elementary.

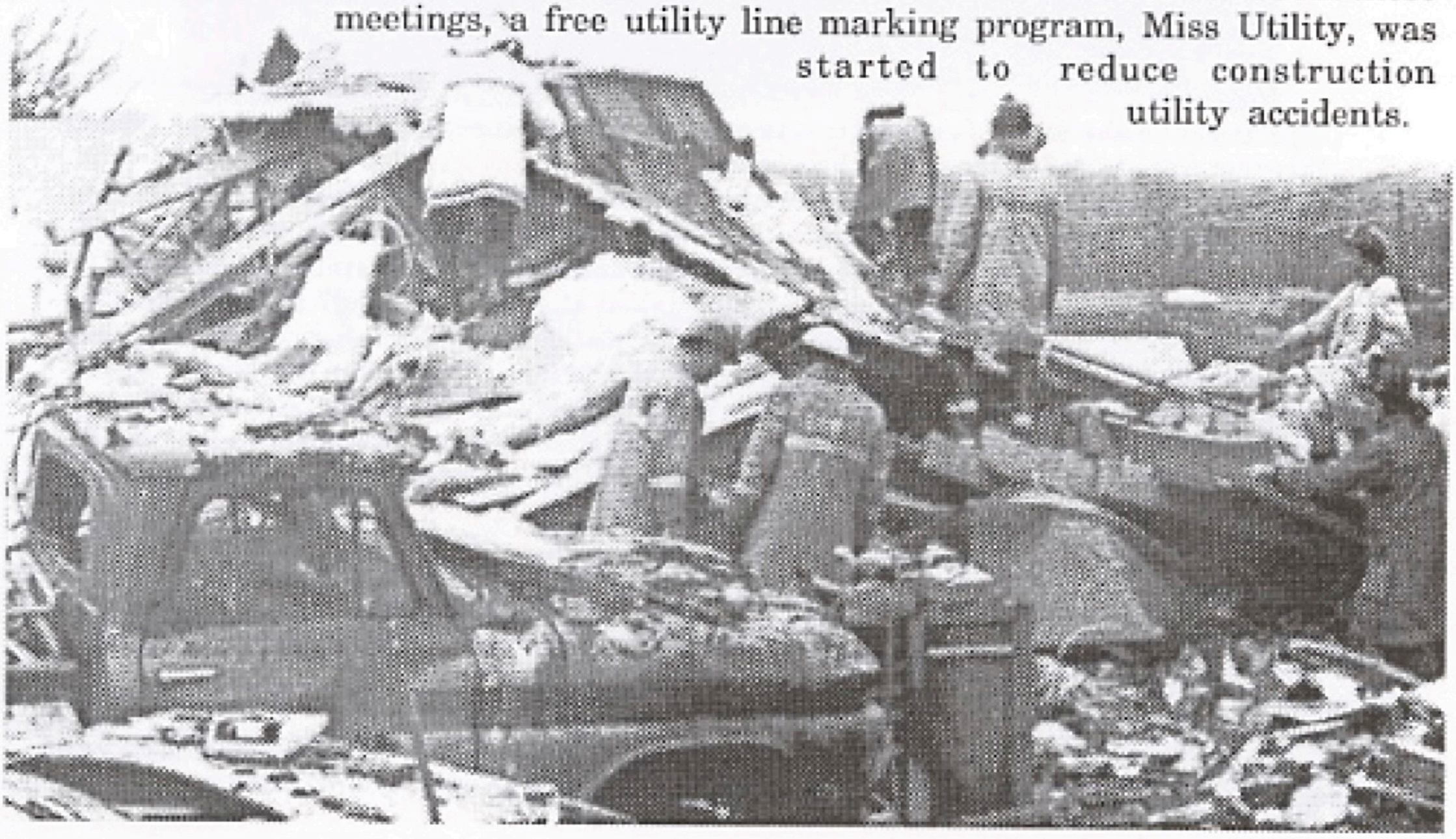
1974

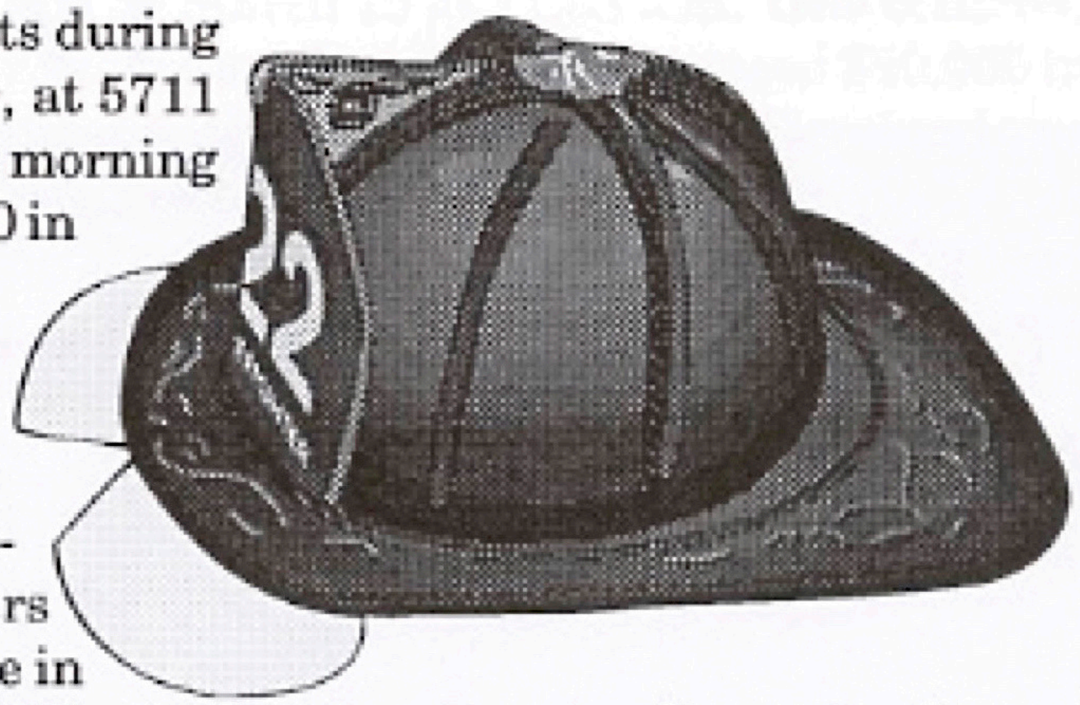
The volunteer corporations continued to question the legal authority of the County Fire Chief and County Government. During the year, a legal battle was waged in the courtrooms over power the volunteers felt had been illegally taken away. This battle came to a head with the "Combined Fire Cases" suit against the County, heard by the Maryland Court of Appeals, in 1974. The Court ruled the Prince George's County Fire Chief had complete operational authority over the fire scene, and apparatus traveling to and from the incident. Further, if a volunteer fire company accepted County funds, the County could impose conditions on the disbursements and audit the expenditures. This and future rulings would firmly establish the authority of the County Fire Chief.

The first of many improvements to public fire safety began with the passage of County Council Bill 64. This bill required the installation of working smoke detectors in all dwelling units completed after January 1, 1974.

During 1974, through the cooperation of all elements in the Department, the County Council adopted the "Minimum Qualifications for Volunteer Fire Fighters and Volunteer Rescue Squadsmen, CB-48." This legislation, which was the first of its kind in the country, assured the training and quality of the volunteer firefighters through a set of strict standards and requirements.

The Mod Squad was used with great success in Bowie after a serious natural gas explosion occurred on January 20, leveling a single-family frame house and damaging 30 other homes in the Pointer Ridge Subdivision. Damage was estimated at $210,000 in a blast that blew debris as far as 300 feet and injured two people. Squad members were quickly on the scene and maintained constant monitoring in the area searching for additional gas. Department efforts, after the disaster, helped start the Miss Utility Program. A task force headed by Bureau Chief Estepp was established by local fire departments and utility companies to resolve the problems with construction accidents. From these meetings, a free utility line marking program, Miss Utility, was started to reduce construction utility accidents.





There were several other major incidents during the year. The next occurred on February 9, at 5711 Marlboro Pike in District Heights. An early morning fire in a metal-working shop caused $100,000 in damage to the building and contents. On March 22, a careless smoker started a fire in a three-story garden apartment in Riverdale. Loss to the building and contents were estimated at $200,000. On the hot afternoon of April 29, the first arriving firefighters at the Pines Apartments, 10232 Prince Place in Largo, found heavy fire in the walls and ceilings of an apartment. Dense smoke and excessive heat soon had a third-alarm assignment on the scene. The fire injured seven firefighters, a civilian and caused $100,0000 damage to the building and contents.

A $100,000 two-alarm fire consumed two stores and damaged a third at the Branchwood Shopping Center in Clinton on September 15. The fire originated in the 7-11 store and quickly spread through a common wall to Coyle's Cleaners. Both stores were gutted by the blaze. Firefighters in Oxon Hill were confronted with a spectacular three-alarm fire on November 7, at the Livingston Terrace Apartments. Firefighters responded from Company 42, two blocks from the scene, reported flames leaping 12 feet above the roof when they arrived. Two apartments were destroyed and six other s suffered damage in the $250,000 blaze.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- There were 401 uniformed personnel, 37 civilians, and 1,000 volunteers in the Department.
- In November, Tuxedo-Cheverly (Station 22) was the first to have career staffing assigned around-the-clock.
- Many of the volunteer and career personnel were trained during the year in a variety of classes by the Training Academy. This included:

  - *The 24-hour Volunteer Basic Class; graduated 63 firefighters.*
  - *The 55-day Career Basic Class; graduated 34 firefighters.*
  - *The 18-hour Volunteer Officer School; graduated 26 volunteer officers.*
  - *The 120-hour Career Officer Candidate School; graduated 15 career officer candidates.*

Local 1619:

- The Union staged its first work slow down during a bitter fight over the contract, emergency responses were not affected. The first contract between the County and the Union was finally signed in late 1974.

Association News:

- There were 109 engines, 19 ladder trucks, 7 squads, and 57 ambulances in service.

New Equipment:

- Hyattsville purchased a Mack 1,000 gpm Engine.

Communications:

- The Ultra-High Frequency (UHF) Radio System with repeaters was installed and placed in service. This new system was a large improvement over the older Low Band System.

New Stations:

- Allentown Road opened a new fire station at 10,900 Fort Washington Road in Silesia.

1975

After the announcement of County Fire Chief Woltz's retirement, County Executive Winfield Kelly appointed Frank Briguglio, as Acting County Fire Chief on May 26, 1975. He was officially sworn in on November 3, 1975. The Chief's first order of business was to issue Special Order 75.05, re-aligning the Department into two main components: Operations under Deputy Fire Chief M. H. (Jim) Estepp, and Support Services under Deputy Fire Chief Glenn W. Moore.

This reorganization was designed to accomplish two major items: the streamlining of bureaucracy within the Department and the consolidation and clarification of chain-of-command. However, the needed changes did not progress as quickly as the Chief wanted. This was due in part because the County Fire Chief lacked the legislated authority over the Department that he needed to properly discharge his responsibilities.

In September, 12 families were relocated for eight months after a gasoline leak entered their basements. During that time, Fire Inspector Cooksey lead the investigation into how the gasoline had seeped through the 7 1/2 acre site. Under the direction of Bureau Chief Estepp, the Fire Department developed legislation on the installation and testing of underground storage tanks.

There were several major fires during the year. A spectacular three-alarm blaze destroyed two apartment buildings and damaged a third when wind-driven flames swept through the Potomac Heights Apartments in Oxon Hill on January 16. The fire displaced 31 families and caused $1.5 million in damage. There were 17 injuries to firefighters and civilians. In February, a fire started in the kitchen of an apartment at Goddard Space Village in Greenbelt. Flames quickly spread through the walls to the roof causing $85,000 in damage. Six families were displaced. Two days later a fire started in the Gateway Apartments in Bladensburg. It quickly spread to the walls and extended to the upper floors. Firefighters had the blaze under control in less than 30 minutes; however, the fire caused $70,000 in damage.

Calls for 1975 year from Straight Tip 4-5-76

Engine Company	29	1,904
Engine Company	33	1,618
Engine Company	26	1,432
Engine Company	30	1,292
Engine Company	9	1,255
Truck	26	685
Truck	17	584
Truck	12	474
Truck	14	450
Ambulance	29	3,161
Ambulance	38	2,846
Ambulance	9	2,692
Ambulance	26	2,299
Ambulance	4	1,985
Squad	14	446
Squad	27	385
Squad	21	263
Squad	22	216

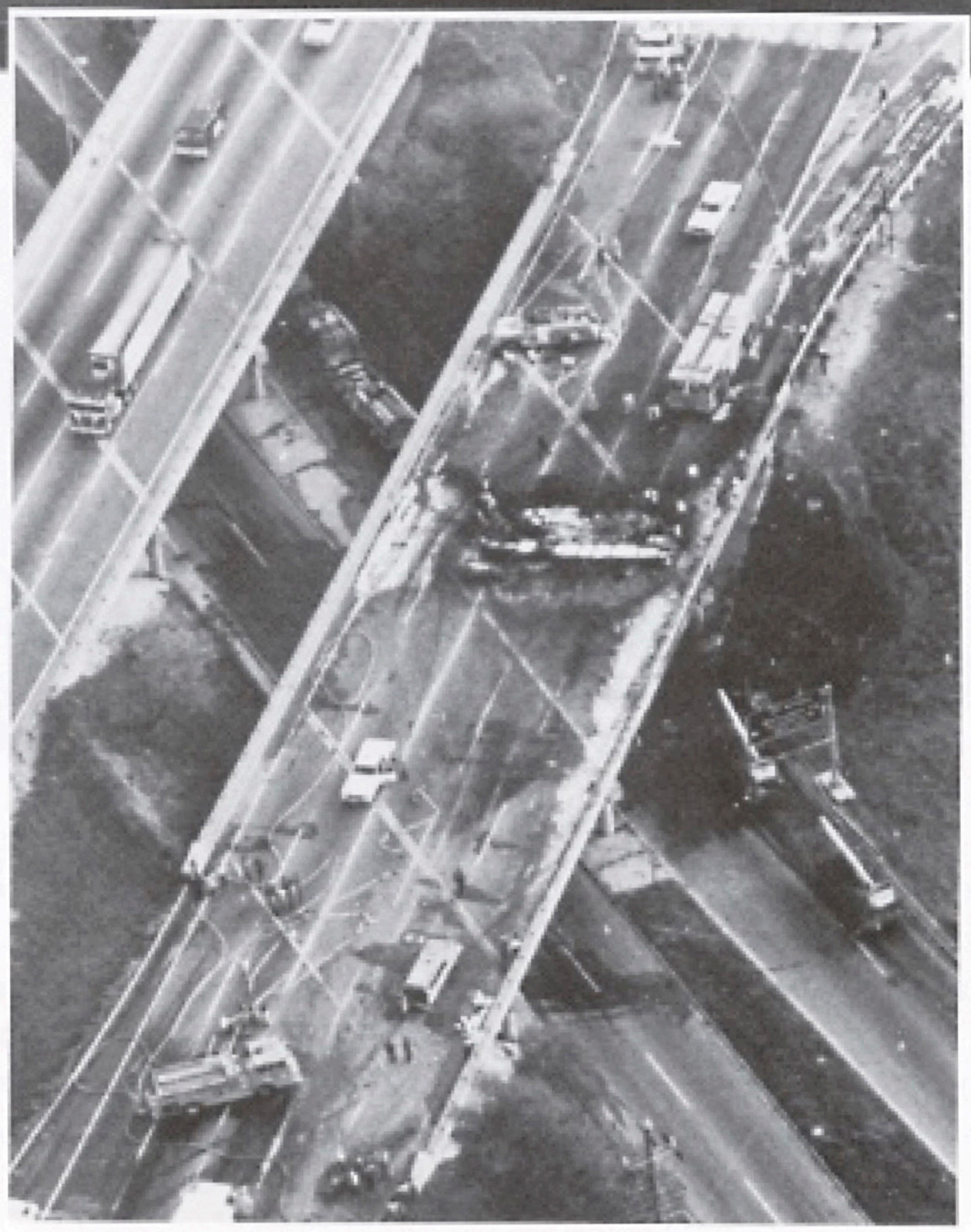
Two fires were reported at the same time on March 19 at 11:53 a.m. One occurred at Belle Haven East Apartments in Landover, where an electrical short caused $80,000 in damage. The second, a $65,000 fire in an apartment at 2900 Markham Lane, Kentland was later determined by investigators to have been caused by arson.

A two-alarm blaze destroyed the Fabric Man store in Suitland. When firefighters arrived, the large glass windows fronting the building were blown-out by excessive heat. Five firefighters were injured battling the $500,000 blaze.

The most spectacular blaze of the year started when a gasoline tanker overturned on Route 495 at the St. Barnabas exit on October 29. A *Washington Post* article described the incident.

"...You could see the light from miles away, said Blue Shallow. When we got closer, we could see this huge cloud of smoke over the road.

For eight hours, the firefighters aimed a stream of water at the blaze. It blackened a quarter-mile stretch of the highway; utility wires under the Beltway melted, falling onto St. Barnabas Road..." [134]



Prince George's County Fire Department:

- The Emergency Medical Services Division was created in 1975 to develop the first Mobile Intensive Care Unit Program for the County. Other such units throughout the country were studied to help the Department form one of the best advanced life support systems.
- County Fire Chief Woltz's Retirement Dinner was held on June 25, 1975.

Local 1619:

- Paul Trader and Danny Jarboe started the first Muscular Dystrophy Softball Tournament.

Association News:

- There were 108 engines, 20 ladder trucks, 19 squads, and 57 ambulances in service.
- In May, the County Council passed CR-31, making the third week in May each year, "Volunteer Firemen's Appreciation Week" in Prince George's County.

New Equipment:

- Forestville purchased a Ford-Bruco 750 gpm Engine.
- Laurel purchased an American LaFrance 100' Ladder Truck.

New Stations:

- On July 31, 1975, new County owned Fire Stations were opened for Calverton (Company 41); Bowie (Company 19); and Silesia (Company 47).

1976

Long tones sounded the death of Volunteer Fire Fighter Raymond A. Smallwood, who died on April 26, 1976.

After having established the framework for the Emergency Medical Division in 1975, Sergeant James Miller was assigned as the Emergency Medical Services Coordinator to further develop the Mobile Intensive Care Unit (M.I.C.U.) Program. Over the next year, the groundwork was completed and the first units were placed in service during late 1977. A phone patch system was installed in the basic ambulances during the year to provide voice contact between doctors and the units. Fourteen volunteer rescue squad personnel completed the initial 240-hour Cardiac RescueTechnician Course (CRT).

Major garden apartment fires burned during the year throughout the County. These included the Spring Hill Lake Apartments on March 12, $300,000 loss; the Plaza Tower West Apartments on April 4, $250,000 loss; Glendale Lake Apartments on June 9, $450,000 loss; Town and Country Apartments on July 18, $175,000 loss; and the Southview Apartments on December 30, $250,000 loss.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- The position of Staff Operations Officer was created on April 25, 1976, to help relieve theBureau Chiefs of excessive standby duties, which detracted from their primary assignments. Each of the four operations officers worked 10 and 14-hour shifts at the Emergency Operations Center in Hyattsville. The first officers assigned were: Captain James Mundy, Captain Bert Shaffner, Captain William Beardmore, Captain William Wise, and Captain John Scanlon.
- The 7th Battalion was created from portions of the 3rd and 5th Battalions on April 26, 1976, with Captain E. S. "Stu" Newman as Commander.
- April 25, County Fire Chief Briguglio promoted Edward E. Tauber to Bureau Chief. Tauber was in command of the Bureau of Fire and Rescue Communications.
- The first Cave-In Units for the County were built by Sergeant Donald Herring (Company 40) and Fire Fighter's Clarence "Frank" Kent and Roy Whitfield (Company 32). Units were constructed from two surplus dump trucks, with area contractors donating lumber, nails, and trench jacks to outfit them.
- The Suitland Hall Federal Building was burned as a drill during the first two weeks in December. Over 500 career and volunteer firefighters practiced their skills in hoselines, ladder raising and forceable entry in the 400 foot main section and 10 wings; this was accomplished by scheduling various companies, several per day, from throughout the County to attend and practice firefighting techniques.
- The unique "House on Wheels" Fire Safety Education Program was presented to over 75,000 citizens and children during the year. This unit was a portable house on wheels which was used to demonstrate the proper use of fire extinguishers and home fire safety. The original idea was started by the volunteers at Riverdale Heights, who used a non-portable house to teach local school children about fire safety.
- Communications hired 27 part-time dispatchers to ease the workload on the full-time staff who handled over 66,000 calls during the year.

Association News:

- There were 106 engines, 20 ladder trucks, 7 squads, 46 ambulances, 17 brush units and 21 special units in service.

New Equipment:

- Ritchie purchased a 1967 Jeep from the Federal Government for $10.00, and members converted it into a brush unit.

1977

In August, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission issued the report, A Systems Analysis of The Prince George's County Fire Department, Standards Evaluation and Fiscal Impact. This master plan was the first prepared on the combined County Fire Department and Volunteer Fire Departments; the last report having been done in 1969. It was developed with the assistance of the County Fire Department and the Volunteer Fire Chief's Council. It was undertaken to help identify and measure the demand for fire services in the County, and provide a planning guide for future growth. While all sides did not agree on all points in the report, several important ideas were presented:

- It was recommended to build several new fire stations between 1978 and 1985 to serve needed areas of the County.
- Reducing "full-service" stations (engine, truck, squad, and ambulance service), to provide limited service depending on the area.
- Relocation of several fire stations to better serve the citizens.
- The vehicle fleet could be reduced and still provide adequate resources.
- Manpower staffing, career and volunteer, needed addressing.

On January 10, five volunteer firefighters received plaques from County Executive Winfield Kelly, in recognition of their 50 years of service to the County. These men included: Mr. T. Weston Scott, Cottage City Volunteer Fire Department; Mr. W. S. Freeman and Mr. Joseph Plumer, Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department; Mr. John L. Sullivan, Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department; and Mr. Ernest Haller, Hillside Volunteer Fire Department.

Major garden apartment fires again tasked the resources of the Fire Department during the year. On January 6, a lighted cigarette dropped in a sofa of a second floor apartment at 3938 Suitland Road, starting a fire which quickly spread to the second and third floors. Loss was estimated at $200,000. A three-alarm blaze in the Whitfield Towne Apartments at 5608 Whitfield Chapel Road caused a $280,000 loss; firefighters battled the blaze in bitter cold weather for more than an hour before gaining control. Two days later, firefighters were again hampered by the bitter cold during a fire at the Potomac Heights Apartments in Oxon Hill. The early January blaze caued $350,000 in damage.

A few hours later on the same day, a building at the Kennedy Woods Apartments in District Heights was reported on fire. Firefighters fought the blaze for an hour and a half before bringing it under control. Property damage was estimated at $357,000 and displaced 26 families. Shortly after 1 p.m., on February 28, a natural gas explosion nearly destroyed an apartment building on 64th Avenue in Riverdale Heights. Three firefighters were injured battling the two-alarm fire. Damage was estimated at $200,000.

The largest loss for the year occurred on November 27. Shortly after 3 a.m., a fire was discovered at the Ascension Catholic Church in Bowie. The 85-year old landmark was destroyed, despite the effort of 60 firefighters. Loss to the historic structure was estimated at $500,000.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- The first career female firefighter was hired, trained and assigned to a firehouse during the year.
- A civilian dispatcher program was started, which allowed six firefighters to be returned to fire suppression duties. Additionally, a new computer system, coupled with a tax grid-based dispatch system, helped with the 76,000 calls for assistance during the year.
- The Career Recruit School was expanded to 14-weeks, under Captain Warren E. Peter, to meet the increased National Fire Protection Association's National Fire Fighter Standard 1001 Requirements.

Association News:

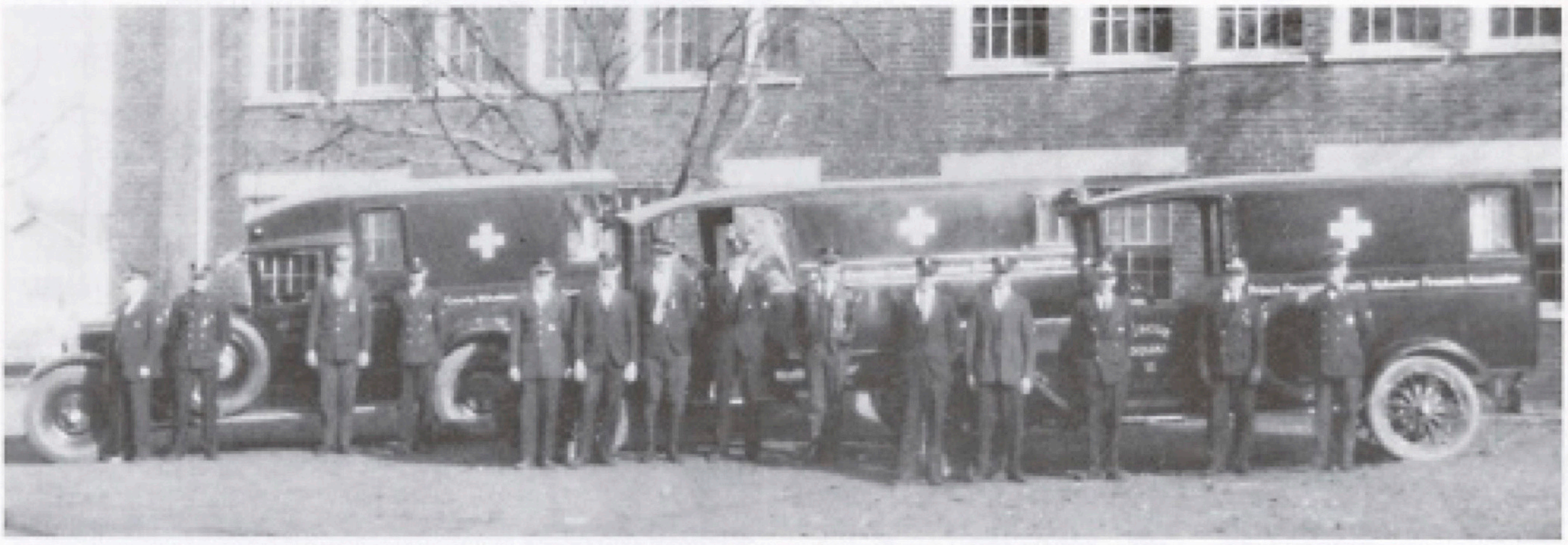
- Volunteer Chief Officers in the 1st, 4th, and 5th Battalions started an evening Battalion Officers Response Program.
- January 17, 1977, saw the start of the Volunteer Firefighter Physical Examination Program.

New Equipment:

- The County purchased two engines, two ladder trucks, and three medic units. The engines were the first new equipment purchased by the County in seven years.
- Marlboro placed in service its first heavy duty rescue squad during the year. A used Chevrolet was purchased from the Greencastle (Pennsylvania) Volunteer Fire Department in May 1977.
- District Heights purchased a Mack-Pierce 1,000 gpm Engine.
- West Lanham Hills purchased two Pierce 750 gpm Engines.

Bureau of Advanced Emergency Medical Services

The delivery of emergency medical care to County residents has changed dramatically from the early days of Doc Leonard and the Rescue Squad Ambulances, as seen in Chapter 2, to today's highly advanced Paramedic Units.



For nearly 50 years, County residents had only basic emergency care available to them. In the mid 1970's, fire departments throughout the Country were using lessons learned during several wars to improve the quality of care provided to the public. Leadership in the Department also recognized the need for improved emergency care for the residents of the County.

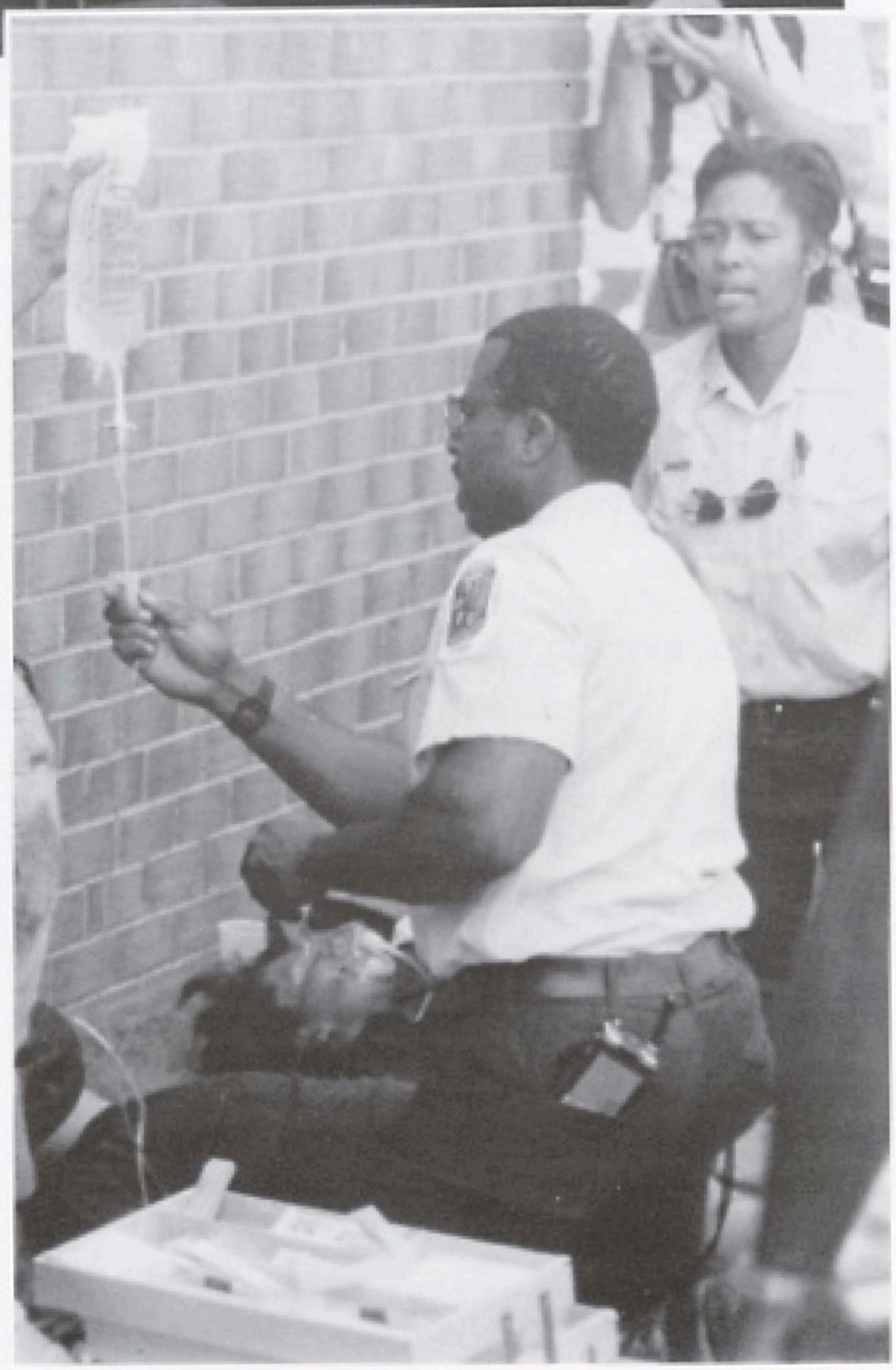
On October 25, 1977, the first 27 career firefighters were certified as Cardiac Rescue Technicians. Soon afterwards, the first three Mobile Intensive Care Units (MICUs) were placed in service at Brentwood (Medic 1) Silver Hill (Medic 2) and Laurel (Medic 3).

A fourth unit was added in May 1981, when Medic 4 was placed in service at Pointer Ridge (Station 43). Later in the year, the Bureau of Advanced Emergency Medical Services assumed responsibility for operating Rescue One, a basic life support ambulance unit, which was staffed by full-time career Emergency Medical Technicians and Rescue Three, which was initially staffed by part-time "700 hour" EMT's. These units were assigned to Battalion 1 and 3 to relieve staffing shortages caused by station ambulance responses.

Three years later, in 1984, the first civilian Paramedic I's were hired in preparation for placing Medic 5 and 6 in service. On December 10, 1984, Medic 5 was placed in service at Clinton (Station 25). The following month, Medic 6 was placed in service on January 28, 1985, at Landover Hills (Station 30).

Seventeen Paramedics completed the EMT-Paramedic Course in the Spring of 1985. The following year, several of the Paramedic I's were promoted to Paramedic II's. During 1986, three new Medic Units were placed in service. They were stationed at Kettering (Station 46) Medic 7, College Park (Station 12) Medic 8, and Silesia (Station 47) Medic 9.

In 1989, 15 Paramedic II's were promoted to the newly created position of Paramedic Sergeant. On January 19, 1990, the 10th Medic Unit was placed in service at Marlboro (Station 20). The third Rescue Unit, Rescue 2, was placed in service at Station 22 in July.



MAJOR FIRES OF 77-78

1978

On April 1, 1978, the fire service in Prince George's County suffered a tragedy when County Fire Chief Frank P. Briguglio died suddenly while vacationing in Florida, at the age of 58.

P.G. COUNTY FIRE CHIEF FRANK BRIGUGLIO DIES

"Frank P. Briguglio, the Prince George's County Fire Chief who worked to cool disputes between volunteer and career firefighters, died yesterday of an apparent heart attack while preparing to return to duty after a Florida vacation.

Briguglio, 58, had been Chief for three years and had served 43 years as a volunteer and professional fireman in the County.

Briguglio was chosen to head the County forces in September 1975 after a four-month, nationwide search for a new Fire Chief to heal the wounds caused by dissention within ranks over the development of a centralized, professional core to the formerly all-volunteer service."[135]

The County Executive appointed M. H. (Jim) Estepp as Fire Chief and on June 6, 1978, Estepp was confirmed as the 3rd County Fire Chief by the County Council.

A further blow to the Department happened in November 1978, at which time, the voters passed a TRIM measure, greatly freezing expenditures for County agencies. The Department continued to grow at a slower pace during the next several years. Most of the growth was due to innovative management ideas, which were used to help decrease expenditures while improving service. Over the next 12 years, Chief Estepp and the Department would gain a national and international reputation for running a combination career/volunteer fire service together over 50 National Association of County Awards for program excellence would be received.

Another death also saddened the County fire service, when on June 15, 1978, Volunteer Fire Fighter James M. O'Connor, of Marlboro, died when the engine he was riding was involved in a collision with a large truck at Route 301 and Croom Station Road. He was killed instantly.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- While the national average for arson conviction was less than two percent, the County's average conviction rate was 95.2 percent.

Local 1619:

- In January, 14 recruit firefighters were due to be released because of a County personnel administrative error; by February, they were all reinstated and back at work.

New Equipment:

- Cottage City purchased a Seagrave, 100' Rearmount Ladder Truck.
- Riverdale purchased a Ford-Pierce, 1,000 gpm Engine.

1979

A reply was drafted by the Fire Service Task Force to address the issues raised by the earlier 1977 report. Members of the County Fire Department, Volunteer Fire Commission, the Volunteer Chief's Council, Volunteer Firemen's Association and Local 1619 assisted in the study. Their recommendations included:

- All operational fire stations remain in place.
- Equipment be assigned to meet minimum response times and each station be assigned an ambulance.
- New fire stations be constructed in six high demand areas of the County.
- Manning levels should be closely monitored, with additional volunteer and career personnel added.
- Volunteer's be given hiring preference; Fire Department license plates for private cars, and a modified LOSAP program were recommended.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- The County received a National Association of Counties Award for the Smoke Detector Inspection Program. During the past year, over 100,000 detectors had been inspected by members of the Department.

Association News:

- A Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) was initiated in 1979 to provide a "retirement" benefit for volunteer members who completed 25 years of service to the County, and had reached the age 60.

New Equipment:

- The County purchased a Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck and assigned it to Company 20.
- Accokeek purchased two Mack 1,000 gpm Engines, Greenbelt purchased a Pierce 1,250 gpm Engine; and Bowie, Station 43, purchased a Ford-Emergency One 1,000 gpm Engine.

1980

The start of the new decade brought with it a rash of large fires which would task the resources of the Department. On January 16, a fire at Fairmont Heights Senior High School caused over $500,000 in damage. The fire discovered at 1:30 a.m., went unreported to the fire department until 4:30 a.m., a delay of 3 hours. Over a period of five days in April, four other major blazes destroyed several apartment buildings, and caused the death of the first career firefighter. A *Prince George's County Post* article on April 24, 1980, describes the ordeal.

PRINCE GEORGE'S RAVAGED BY FOUR MAJOR APARTMENT FIRES

"In a five-day period this week, the County suffered four major apartment fires which resulted in the death of a County firefighter, caused an estimated $1,550,000 damage, and left 70 families homeless.

The first fire occurred on the night of April 16. Firefighters responded to a call for a fire at 9923 Goodluck Road, in the Glenn Dale Woods apartment complex. There had been an explosion in the basement laundry room of one of the buildings where a broken pipe had allowed gas to escape.

After the Fire Department arrived, a second explosion caused the front of the building to collapse, crushing Career Fire Fighter Thomas L. Graves, Jr., 31, of the Glenn Dale Fire Station. Graves was the first career firefighter to die in the line-of-duty in the fire department's 14-year history.

According to Capt. William V. Goodwin, of the County Fire Department, a 15-year-old juvenile was charged with "being a delinquent by virtue of failing to report immediately a gas leak." An estimated $250,000 in damages occurred as a result of the fire. Goodwin would not comment on how it was determined that the youth allegedly knew of the broken pipe.

The next fire occurred at approximately 6 p.m., April 18, in the 5300 block of 85th Avenue, in the Bryant Woods Apartment Complex. Goodwin said the fire was started in one of the apartments by two juveniles under the age of reason (under seven), who were playing with matches. Twenty families were displaced by the three-alarm fire which caused $400,000 in damage. Three firefighters sustained minor injuries while trying to bring the fire under control.

Then, a few hours later, at 3:24 a.m., on April 19, one of the buildings in the Mattapony Apartment Complex at 5016 Townsend Way caught fire. When firefighters arrived, heavy fire was showing on the second floor of the three-story building. Robert Coske, 20, an apartment resident who apparently dove through a window, suffered first and second-degree burns to his hands, damage to his respiratory system and severing part of the flesh on one arm. He was taken to Union Memorial Hospital.

A second man suffered a laceration to the head, he was taken to Prince George's General Hospital where he was treated and released. The two-alarm fire is believed to have been caused by food being left on a lit stove in one of the apartments. It resulted in an estimated $80,000 loss in building damage and $20,000 loss of contents. Ten families were forced to find shelter after their homes were destroyed.

Finally, on April 20, a second fire broke out at the Bryant Woods Apartment Complex. The call came in shortly before midnight and 200 firefighters responded to help fight the blaze. Forty-nine pieces of apparatus from 22 different stations arrived at the scene. "Approximately half of our resources were there while the fire was at its height," said Goodwin. The four-alarm blaze caused an estimated $800,000 damage, displaced 40 families, and resulted in injuries to five firefighters."[136]

September saw a three-alarm fire at the Marlboro Race Track Grandstand which caused $700,000 in damage. Over 100 firefighters battled the blaze for over 7 hours before gaining control.

By 1980, the County Fire Service consisted of over 1,000 active volunteers and 450 career employees. Together they staffed 111 Engines, 19 Ladder Trucks, 9 Heavy Rescue Squads, 45 Ambulances and 42 specialized units.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- There were two Deputy Fire Chief positions (Field Operations and Special Operations) with four bureaus and a separate Administrative Services Division. Field Operations consisted of the Bureaus of Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Services, which accounted for 73.3 percent of the budget.
- The County Fire Department launches a drive to reduce unnecessary ambulance calls.
- Career members of Station 33 began operating an ambulance during the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- An improved County Fire Safety Code was adopted.

Local 1619:

- Work hours for the career shift was changed to 24-hours on and 72-hours off. Ron Milor was elected as President.

Association News:

- College Park started the Alarm System Response Team, "Alarm Unit 12," as a result of the increased and numerous calls for alarm system activations at night on the University.
- Volunteer medics saved the County $21,196, mostly by staffing Medic 3 at the Laurel Rescue Squad. This savings would help defray the startup cost of Medic 4, which was placed in service the following year.

New Equipment:

- Branchville purchased a Pirsch 1,250 g.p.m.Engine.
- Berwyn Heights purchased a Mack Squad Truck.
- Baden bought a Hendricks 1,000 gpm Pumper and dedicated it to the Ladies Auxiliary.
- Silver Hill purchased a Pierce Pumper for $98,000.
- The County purchased a Mack/Four Guys, 2,500 gallon Tanker and assigned it to Company 23.

1981

The County fire service continued to grow during the early 1980's. There were over 1,000 active volunteers and 325 career firefighters assigned to the 46 volunteer fire stations. These combined forces responded to over 70,343 emergencies during the year. Though it operated as a combined system, the two sides, 10 years after the Charter, still did not agree on every issue.

Fires for the year ranged from small room and contents to large garden apartments. On September 30, a fire occurred in an auto body shop at 15006 Marlboro Pike. This fire caused $320,000 in damage to the building and contents. December was a busy month for the Department. During the month, fire destroyed over $800,000 in property. On December 20, the first fire occurred in a multi-family dwelling at 1110 Kennebec Street. Christmas tree lights overheated starting the $200,000 blaze. Two days later, on December 22, a $150,000 blaze occurred in a commercial establishment at 5012 Herzel Place in Beltsville. The next day, a $200,000 loss occurred at another commercial establishment at 46th and Decatur Street in Edmonston. The year ended with a $290,000 fire in a multi-family dwelling at 9560 Muirkirk Road in Laurel.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- Medic 4 was placed in service at Bowie Station 43.
- The County began using alert pages for the volunteers.

Local 1619:

- A two year contract was implemented which provided for a 17.95 percent pay raise by January 1, 1983. Increases to the pension benefits, and promotional raises were also gained.
- Career Services Memorandum #19 issued to insure fair compensation for excess time worked.

New Equipment:

- The County converted four Army surplus 4x4's jeeps into brush units.
- Seat Pleasant purchased a GMC 4x4 Mini-Pumper.

1982

After years of sharing other local fire training facilities, the County began the construction of their own facility. The Navy donated 21 acres on the Cheltenham Navy Communications Facility, with a 25 year lease, for the construction of a fire training academy. A quonset hut was already on the premises. This building was converted to a smoke house and maze to train firefighters in the use of breathing apparatus in confined low visability smokey areas. A group of Navy Reserve SEEBEES, along with volunteer and career members, donated countless hours of time to construct the maze. The administration building and classrooms were built from temporary school classrooms donated by the Board of Education. The first mobile training tower on the east coast was purchased for $85,000. A combination smoke tower/burn building was also purchased and erected for $123,000. This structure was the first of its type in the nation when it was constructed. It had a 3-story smoke tower in the center and a burn room on each side, along with a built-in standpipe sprinkler system. Once again, the Department overcame budget constraints and other problems by finding innovative answers to the problems.

In late 1982, explosions rocked a residential section of Takama Park, an urban community encompassed into Prince George's County, Montgomery County and the District of Columbia. The explosions caused over $200,000 in damage to 15 homes. Over 300 firefighters and 50 pieces of equipment were on the scene for hours.

On September 28, 1982, tragedy struck at Station 22, when Fire Fighter Barbara "Sandy" Lee fell from the jump seat of Truck 22, as it was responding on a call. She landed under the wheels suffering massive injuries. Afterwards, she underwent over 100 operations and many months of intense rehabilitation. Upon returning to work, she embarked on a safety program throughout the country. The program was titled *"Under the Wheels"*.

Injured Firefighter Battles for Her Life

By Elsa Walsh
Washington Post Staff Writer

Firefighter Barbara (Sandy) Lee was struggling for her life yesterday after falling from a fire truck and under its back wheels during a routine run on a job that friends say was her "first love."

Lee, one of eight women firefighters among 513 in Prince George's County, was critically injured Tuesday night when she fell from the ladder truck as it rolled slowly down the long ramp at 8:25 p.m. from the department's Tuxedo-Cheverly station onto Tuxedo Road, a few miles north of the District line.

It is not clear yet what precipitated her fall, but yesterday the Potomac Senior High School graduate lay in critical condition at the Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore after undergoing five hours of surgery to repair massive internal and external injuries.

Capt. Jim Mundy, director of the fire department's communication office and a friend of Lee, called firefighting her life ambition. He described her as "intelligent, personable and a good firefighter" with excellent prospects for promotion.

Indeed, Lee's resume bears out her drive to be a good firefighter. At 19, the Laurel native was a volunteer at the Bladensburg station. At 23, she became one of the first women hired by the Prince George's County fire department. And three weeks ago, at age 26, Lee qualified to begin training for sergeant—the first woman in the department's history to do so.

An investigation of the incident is under way, Mundy said, but no one appears to be at fault. There were four firefighters on the truck at the time and Lee was riding on the right side in an open area without a barrier. The truck, which weighs more than 16 tons, was moving at less than 10 mph down a dry ramp, according to Mundy, and no one noticed Lee's fall as the truck left the ramp until the back wheels rolled over her abdomen and legs and she screamed.

BARBARA (SANDY) LEE
... firefighting her life ambition

Lee was rushed by paramedics to Prince George's General Hospital, where her friends and coworkers kept a bedside vigil. About 25 firefighters appeared immediately at the hospital after the accident was announced Tuesday evening and the response to a call for blood donations was overwhelming, Mundy said.

The alarm that started the fire truck rolling Tuesday night was triggered by a dramatic change in water pressure that set off the sprinkler system in a Bladensburg apartment building.

United Firefighters T.A.S.K.

The Prince George's County Chapter, United Firefighters T.A.S.K., of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters was started in 1982. The first elected President was Thomas Daniels. They were founded to promote the causes of minority employees of the Department.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- Legislation was passed requiring every County residence to have a working smoke detector.
- The Fire and Rescue Communications Division moved from Hyattsville, to a new $3 million dollar facility near Seat Pleasant in 1982. The facility placed fire, police and "911" operators in adjoining areas of a modern dispatch center, which was constructed in an old elementary school.
- A Volunteer Dispatcher Program was started to provide them with detailed working knowledge of day to day functions in the division and to increase manpower during busy periods.

Local 1619:

- A new contract was signed with an 18 percent pay raise. The retirement system was improved to 20 years of service at 50 percent pay with 70 percent after 30 years.

New Equipment:

- Seat Pleasant purchased a Ford-Emergency One 750 gpm Engine; Bowie, Station 19, purchased a Hahn 1,000 gpm Engine; Marlboro purchased a Seagrave 1,000 gpm Engine; and Clinton purchased a GMC 750 gpm Engine.

New Stations:

- Allentown Road renovated Station 32 at a cost of $315,000.

APPARATUS - MID 70'S THROUGH EARLY 80'S

SPECIAL TACTICAL UNIT

The Prince George's County Fire Department's Special Tactical Unit (S.T.U.) is another unique component of the Department. It was created in the Fall of 1982 to help alleviate and reduce response deficiencies and reduce overtime expenditures. This unit provides a well trained elite mobile firefighting force which is deployed to address the following issue:

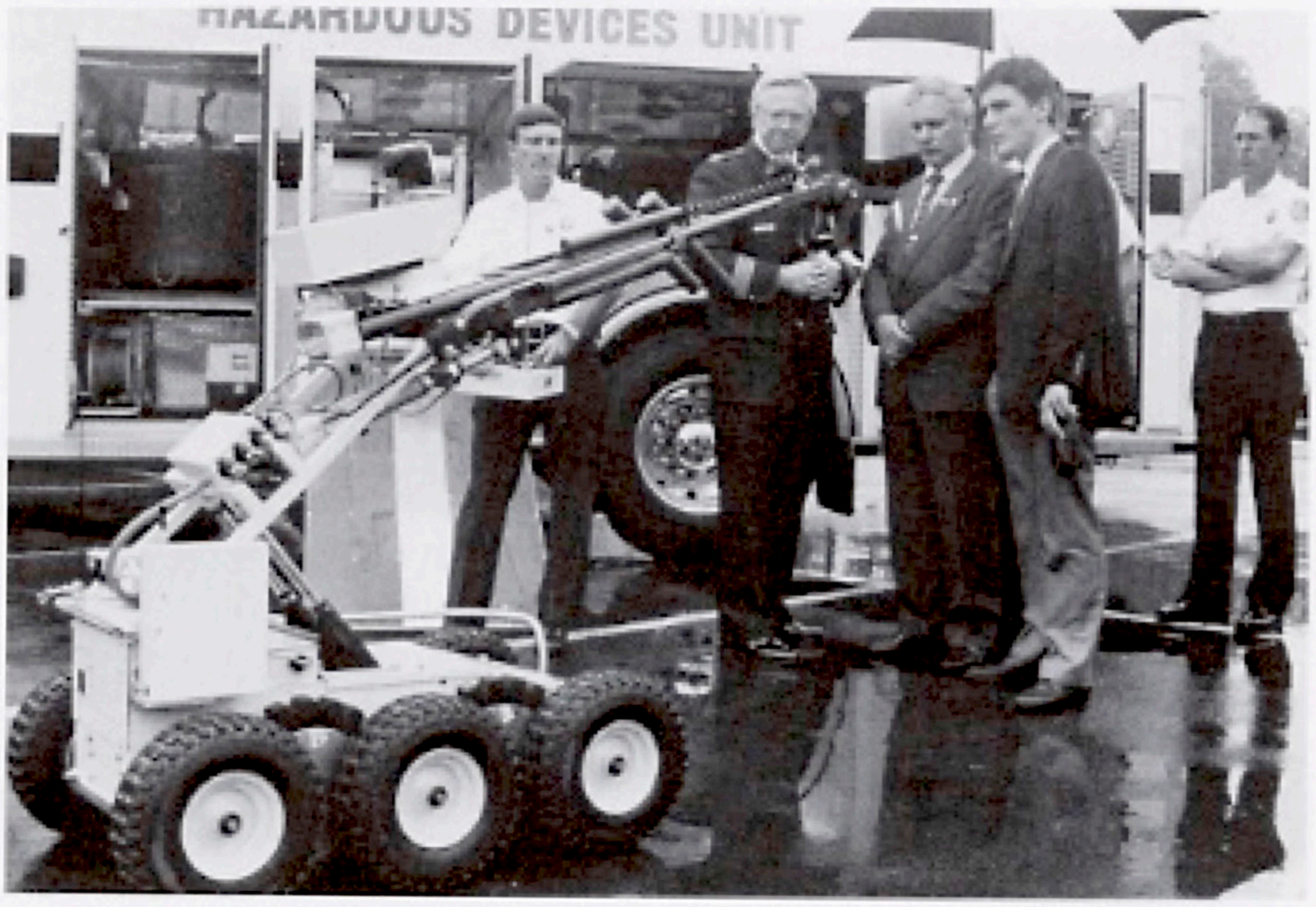
- *The need for expanded supervision on a 24-hour basis.*
- *Reduce high overtime expenditures.*
- *Cover shift vacancies caused by the absence of regularly assigned station personnel.*
- *Improve deficient response patterns in certain areas of the County.*

What resulted was a unit comprised of four platoons, each working the standard 24 hours on duty and 72 hours off duty shift. Each shift consists of eight firefighters and a shift commander. The shift commander also serves as the Departmental Operations Duty Officer. In order to effectively and safely deploy personnel, the County is divided into seven sectors, each of which contains three to four shift work fire stations. Each S.T.U. firefighter is trained and qualified to operate the apparatus intheir respective sector. When vacancies of regularly assigned staff occurs , the S.T.U. firefighter is utilized to cover the position. Firefighters assigned to the Unit are among the most skilled and experienced in the Department. Most are capable of operating apparatus in six to ten different stations.

Due to the difficulty of the position, qualifications have been established mandating that all S.T.U. personnel have a minimum of two years experience as a career firefighter

and be certified as Emergency Medical Technicians. In addition, S.T.U. personnel must have past performance ratings equal to "Exceeds Standards" or above for two years prior to selection. When not covering staffing shortages, they are assigned as extra personnel in fire stations experiencing response problems. Members of the unit are also trained in areas of fire prevention and enforcement, criminal fire scene preservation, high-rise rappelling, hazardous material control, cave-in extrication and emergency command post operation. Also included under the Unit is the Departments Hazardous Materials Response Team.

HAZARDOUS DEVICES UNIT



The Hazardous Devices Unit, known as the "Bomb Squad" is another specialized unit of the Department. Prince George's County is one of the few jurisdictions to have the Fire Department responsible for explosive devices. Members use state-of-the-art cameras, robots and bomb dogs to mitigate explosive devices found within the County.

1983

The year saw the death of Volunteer Fire Fighter Michael P. McCarthy of Morningside, on September 12, 1983. He was the 26th member of the Prince George's County Fire Service to die in the line-of-duty.

The Department battled several major blazes during the year. On February 14, a fire occurred in a single family dwelling at 2803 Liberty Place in Bowie. The fire caused an $85,000 loss. Six days later, an early morning fire occurred in a single family dwelling at 6517 8th Place in Chillum. The $150,000 fire was caused by a electrical short in a lamp cord. In March, a fire occurred on the 2nd, at the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Treatment Plant on Sandy Spring Road in Laurel. A welding accident caused the $175,000 fire.

Shortly before midnight of March 30, a fire occurred at Al's Hardware in Captiol Heights. The fire swept through the store causing $100,000 in damage. A mid-morning fire on the same day at 11709 South Laurel Drive, caused over $200,000 in damage to an apartment complex. On September 28, at 7:43 p.m., calls were received for the report of a fire at the 84 Lumber Company in Seabrook. First arriving units were confronted with heavy fire throughout the lumber warehouse. It took firefighters several hours to bring the $750,000 fire under control.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- Hillside had a fully paid crew consisting of a career officer and firefighters around-the-clock.
- The first Rescue Unit was placed in service at Chapel Oaks (Station 38) and served the areas of Chapel Oaks, Seat Pleasant, Capitol Heights, Hillside, Kentland, Kettering, and Ritchie areas. The program used non-firefighter Emergency Medical Technicians to respond with the ambulance.
- A computerized Project Identification was started to identify handicapped citizens or citizens with a language barrier for response personnel.
- There were 65,000 calls, which included over 42,000 ambulance, 4,000 fires, 1,600 vehicle fires, and 2,400 hazardous situations.

Local 1619:

- Civilian communications and ambulance employees were added to the Union.

New Equipment:

- Silver Hill purchased a 1983 Mack Engine for $160,000, and Laurel Rescue Squad purchased a GMC-Ranger Heavy Duty Squad Truck.

New Stations:

- Branchville renovated the station with the addition of a temporary school building.

60 Firefighters Battle Blaze at P.G. Lumber Store

About 60 firefighters battled a two-alarm blaze last night that caused damages estimated at $750,000 to the 84 Lumber showroom in the 9500 block of Lanham-Severn Road in Seabrook, Prince George's County fire officials reported.

One firefighter was taken to Prince George's Doctors Hospital suffering from minor burns, officials said.

They said the blaze broke out about 7:45 p.m. in the corrugated metal structure and was brought under control in an hour.

Several employes who were in the store where the fire started shortly before closing time were not hurt, officials said.

The cause of the fire was under investigation. Firefighters were still at the scene late last night.

1984

The County Fire Department increased its specialized operational elements during the year. This included the revamping and establishment of a permanent HAZMAT Team. A "Management by Objectives" program (MBO) was implemented to begin a systems approach to managing the growing Department. The Department was the only one in County government to have a full working MBO system in place.

During the mid 1980's, both the County Fire Department and the Volunteer companies began large purchases of new fire apparatus. For the volunteers, much of the needed money came from Las Vegas Nights. Companies, which operated these events, rapidly bought new state of the art fire apparatus. For other companies, the State offered money to assist in new equipment purchases. Likewise, the County Executive increased the local funds available for purchase of equipment by both the County and the volunteer companies. Chief Estepp was appointed to a special commission which studied the need for funding to aid fire/rescue departments in the State.

On January 7, 1984, at 1:06 p.m., reports were received by Fire Communications of a fire at Freeway Airport in Bowie. The first arriving unit found heavy fire in one hanger. Since there were no hydrants in the area, a special alarm was sounded for tankers. Within an hour, the fire was under control. The structure and one plane were destroyed in the $218,000 fire. Cause of the fire was later determined to be gasoline vapors from an automobile under repair.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- The Department began a massive effort to train 350,000 citizens in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Two new Medic Units were added in Clinton (Station 25) Medic 5, and in Landover Hills (Station 30) Medic 6.
- The second Rescue Unit was placed in service at District Heights, Station 26. Rescue 3, as it was called, served the area around District Heights and Silver Hill. Together the two Rescue Units responded to over 10,000 emergency calls during their first three years of operation.

- The Hazardous Materials Response Team was formed to control and deal with dangerous material, including radioactive items, underground gasoline leaks, transportation accidents, and monitoring the clean-up of hazardous waste sites.
- There were 447 career firefighters and 65 non-uniform employees.
- Apparatus Maintenance fitted all remaining vehicles with seat belts, back-up alarms and safety bars.
- Over 1,000 Self Contained Breathing Air Units were converted to 30-minute positive pressure configuration.
- The "Firehawks" program was launched to provide counseling to juveniles who had been identified as fire setters.
- Over 66,000 calls for assistance were handled during the year.

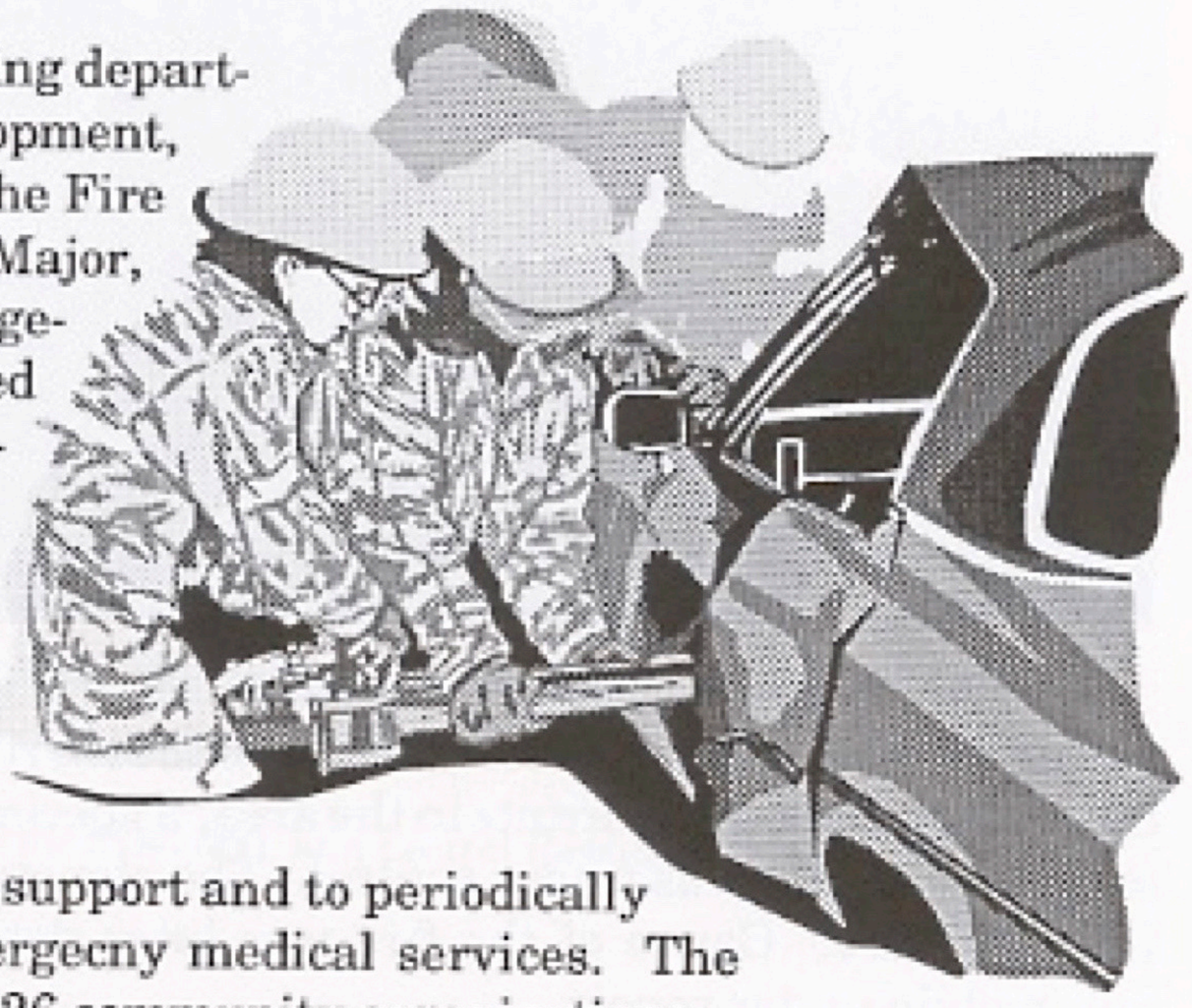
Local 1619:

- A new contract granted a 4 percent pay raise, a $600 clothing allowance and reduction in the pension plan payments from 8 to 7 percent.

New Equipment:

- Bowie, Station 39, purchased a Sutphen 1,500 gpm Engine.

1985



To help manage the rapidly growing department and assist with new program development, the position of Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief was upgraded from Captain to Major, and a third Deputy Fire Chief for Management Services was created. This resulted in the shifting of several bureaus and divisions to achieve a more rational balance of responsibility within the Department. In conjunction with the moves, Chief Estepp started a Citizens' Advisory Council with three goals: to serve the community by involvement of fire and rescue personnel, foster community support and to periodically review the issues which impact on emergecny medical services. The group consisted of representatives from 26 community organizations.

The Department's resources were tested on September 6, 1985 when a call was received for a tanker fire on the Beltway. First arriving units were confronted by stopped traffic on all lanes of the Beltway. Battalion 1 arrived on the scene an observed and overturned propane tanker truck on fire. Over the next 18 hours, the incident required 18 engine companies, 3 truck companies, 2 Heavy Rescue Squads, 4 ambulances, 1 medic unit and 4 specialized units. Local, State and Federal agencies worked side by side to resolve the incident.

Other major fires for the year included a fire on February 22, at the T. V. I. Corporation , 5004 Herzel Place, in Beltsville. The commercial establishment suffered over $750,000 in damage as a result of the blaze. On March 1, a fire occurred in the Craft Art Woodworking Shop on Route 301 in Upper Marlboro. Firefighter's battled the $500,000 blaze relentlessly before gaining control. A two alarm blaze also occurred on the evening of September 15, 1985, at 5708 Ager Road.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- A Management Intern program was started to expose and prepare officers who were inexperienced with administrative work for future management work.
- An Equal Opportunity Officer was appointed to insure fair and equal treatment for all Department personnel.
- Around the clock career staffing was placed at Station 44.
- Arson fires continued a seven year decline in the County.
- In August, the Hazardous Material Response Team began operation, with a three tiered system:
  - Level I training consisted of regular fire/rescue units in the department who received 8 hours of training in hazardous materials recognition and identification, incident safety, hazard and risk assessment, and Fire Department General Orders.
  - Level II training consisted of designated heavy duty rescue squads and two support units, which carry specialized equipment and supplies. These personnel received over 50 hours of training to provide assistance to Level III members.
  - Level III training consisted of 36 volunteer and career members of the Department and the Hazardous Materials Operations Vehicle. The Level III members act as technical consultants to the Incident Commander and are responsible for the coordination and operation of all hazardous material incidents in the County.

Local 1619:

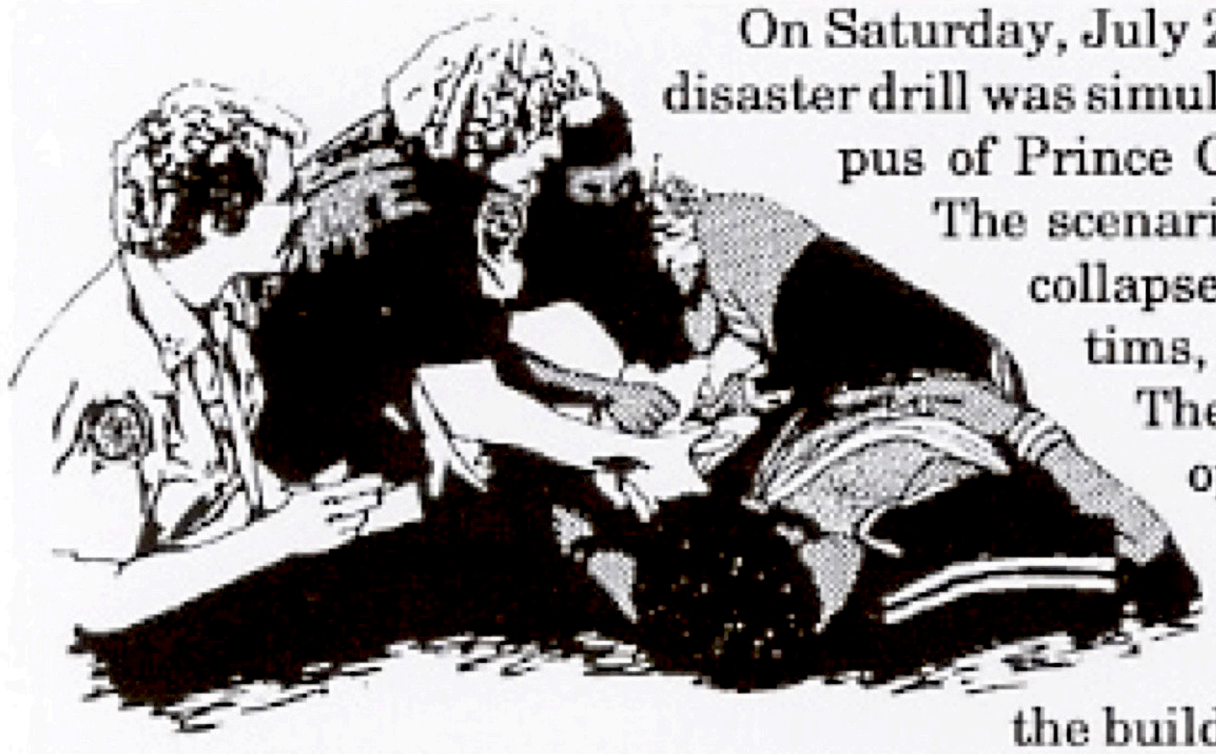
- A new contract provided for an 18.2 percent pay raise over three years. The position of Fire Fighter III was also created.
- The annual softball tournament earned $22,000 for muscular dystrophy. Teams from throughout the United States and Overseas competed in the event.

New Equipment:

- Laurel purchased a Kenworth-Emergency One, 1,250 gpm Engine.
- Glenn Dale purchased a Spartan Gladiator 1,000 gpm Engine with a 10-men enclosed cab.

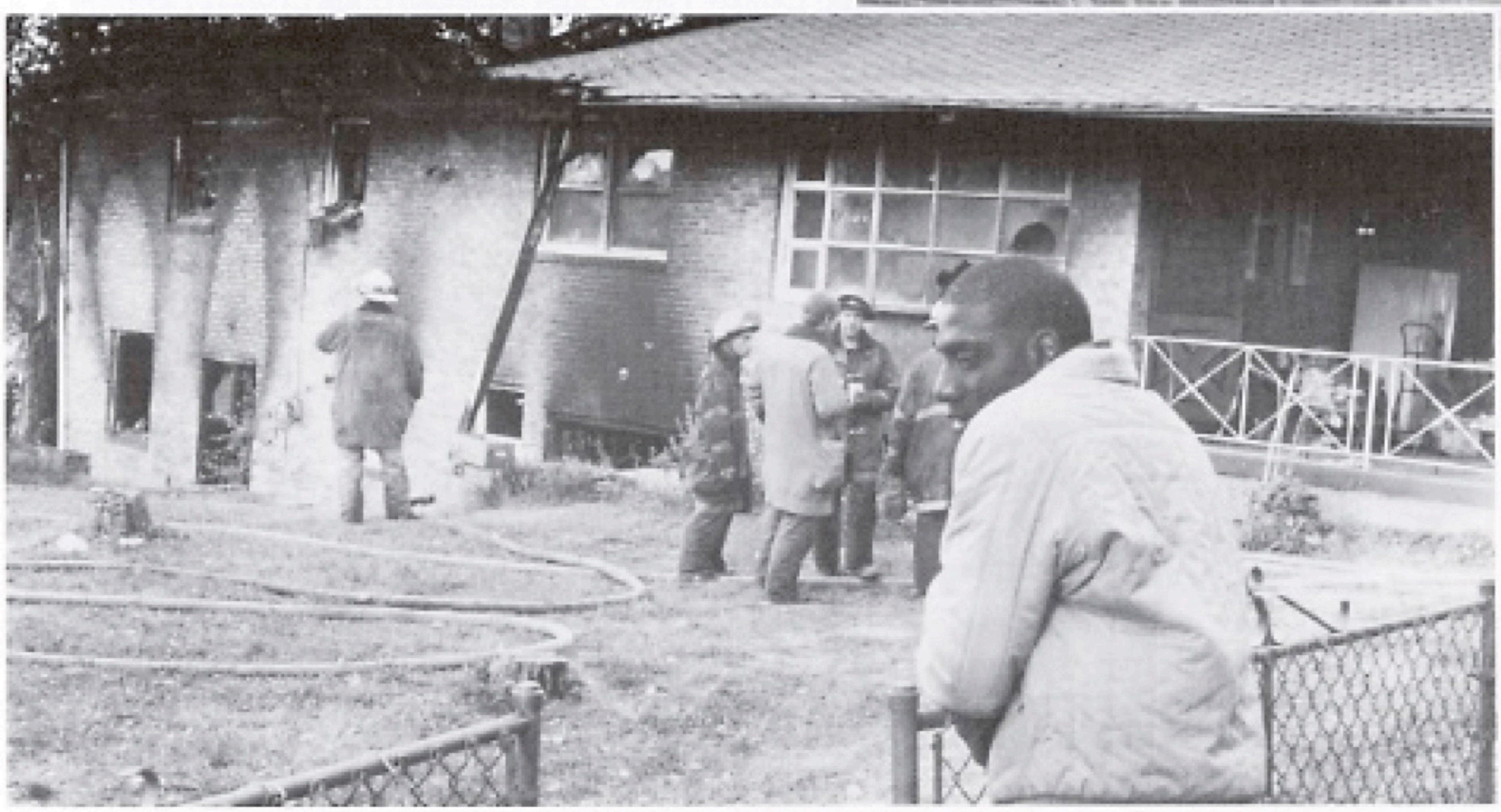
1986

During the year, the Department continued its growth from the previous year. This included the establishment of a Senior Management Institute in conjunction with Bowie State University. College courses were offered to prepare personnel for greater responsibilities. An Employee Assistance Program (E.A.P.) was also developed by Fire Lieutenant Elizabeth Redding to offer a wide variety of professional counseling services to all members of the Department. These services include drug and alcohol addictions, marital and family issues, critical incident stress debriefing and financial counseling. Medic 7 went into service on May 5, 1986, at Kentland, Station 46. Chief Estepp received the Janet L. Hoffman Award for Public Service from the Maryland Chapter, American Society for Public Administration. This is the top management award for local government officials.



On Saturday, July 26, 1986, a full scale operation, realistic disaster drill was simulated at Novack Field House on the Campus of Prince George's Community College in Largo. The scenario called for a fire and partial building collapse resulting in approximately 1,000 victims, in various degrees of medical distress. The exercise was conducted through the cooperation of the County Fire Department and the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services System. Simulated patients were removed from the building, triaged and transported via ambulance or helicopter to appropriate local hospitals. The exercise proved to be a success in the abilities of the Department to handle a large scale disaster.

The year started off with a fire on January 16, at 920 Palmer Road in Fort Washington. The garden apartments suffered $400,000 in damage as a result of the fire. On February 25, at 12:33 a.m., a fire occurred at the Cherokee Lane Elementary School in Adelphi. Arson caused $250,000 loss to the school building. March 23, at 1:09 a.m., a large fire occurred, across the street from Station 33, at the Drug Fair. Units responding to the fire reported heavy fire conditions. The blaze caused a $300,000 loss to the building and contents.



Prince George's County Fire Department:

- On January 1, 1986, the Department implemented a new data system. The Fire/Rescue Incident Tracking System (FRITS) which enabled managers to make better decisions regarding budget, apparatus and manpower. FRITS is primarily an informational storage and retrieval system.
- Over 66,500 calls were handled during the year.

Local 1619:

- The 13th Annual Softball Championship was held on September 5th, 6th, and 7th, with over $20,000 raised by the Union for Muscular Dystrophy.

New Equipment:

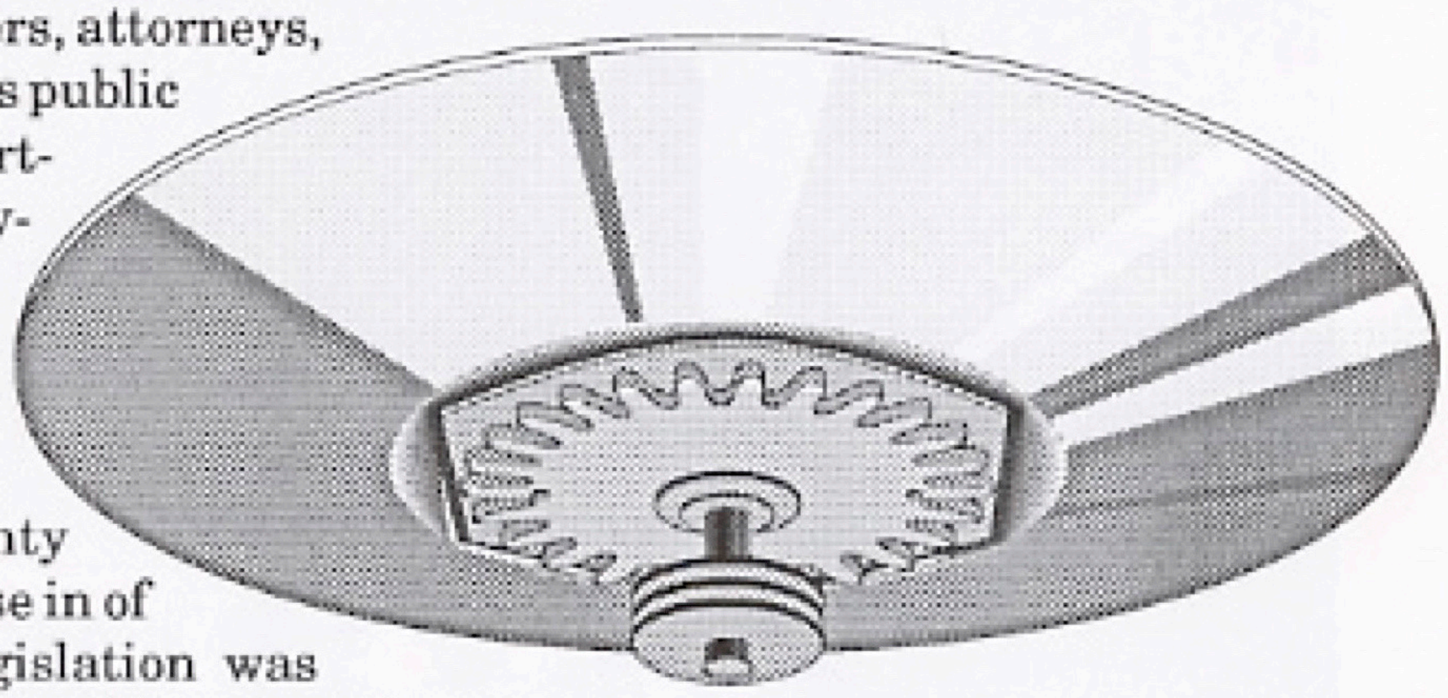
- The County purchased three Seagrave 4-door Cab, 1,250 gpm Engines and assigned them to Forestville (Station 23), Chapel Oaks (Station 38), and Allentown Road (Station 47). They also bought two Seagrave 4-door Cab 100' Aerial Ladder Trucks and assigned them to West Lanham Hills (Station 28) and Bowie (Station 39).
- With the help of the Washington Metro Rail System, a specially equipped breathing air support unit was placed in service at Capitol Heights.

New Stations:

- On August 12, ground was broken at Hyattsville (Station 1), Bowie (Station 39) and Accokeek (Station 24) for building additions. These were the first major additions to the stations since the 1960's. Hyattsville was constructed in 1959 for $91,000, the new addition cost $318,000. Station 39 was built in 1965 at $106,000, the new addition cost $585,000 and added more apparatus room and living spaces. Accokeek's first station was built for $50,000 in 1962, the new addition cost $383,000 and provided 3,700 square feet.

1987

Perhaps the single most important fire safety issue in the 100 year history of the County Fire Service was passed by the County Council in late 1987. Studies of the fire problem in Prince George's County during the year indicaated 89 percent of all fire deaths occurred in residential properties. Research showed the new quick response sprinkler heads could significantly reduce fire injuries and deaths in the County. A task force was established by Chief Estepp, composed of select representatives of the private sector, including builders, developers, attorneys, insurers and other, as well as public service agencies, Fire Department personnel and other government representatives.



Legislation was forwarded by the County Executive, Paris N. Glendening, to the County Council for a three year phase in of the requirements. The legislation was passed on November 19, 1987 and became effective on January 26, 1988. Requirements under the new law included the following provisions:

Multi-family Dwellings (New):

All new multi-family dwellings must be fully sprinklered after of June 30, 1988.

Townhouses (New):

All new townhouses must be fully sprinklered after December 31, 1988.

Single-Family Dwellings (New):

All new model homes constructed after February 1, 1988, are required to be fully sprinklered. The builders are required to furnish a sprinkler option for review by the buyer. All new homes constructed after December 31, 1991 must be sprinklered.

Hotels/Motels, Dormitories (New):

All hotels, motels, and dormitories are required to have complete sprinkler protection after June 30, 1988.

Hotels/Motels, Dormitories (Existing):

All hotels, motels and dormitories will be required to have complete sprinkler protection by February 1, 1989.

During the year, work progressed on renovations to an old elementary school in Landover Hills. The $1.8 million dollar project would convert the school to 25,000 square feet of useable office space.

On June 12, at 5:43 p.m., a large fire occurred in the People's Drug Store at 803 Southern Avenue in Oxon Hill. The commercial establishment suffered a $1.5 million dollar loss. Other fires during the year included the fire on February 5, at 4647 Dallas Place, $650,000 loss; August 30, 4615 Dallas Place, $600,000 loss and December 4, 10200 Prince Place in Upper Marlboro, $290,000 loss. On Thanksgiving day, a tragic loss of life occurred in a single-family dwelling in Seat Pleasant. Six children died in an early morning fire attributed to juvenile fire play.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- Chief Estepp was elected as 2nd VicePresident of I.A.F.C.
- The "Smoke Detector Give-Away" and "Kitchen Fire Safety Program," were two of the tools used by the Department to promote fire safety.
- Medic 8 was placed in service at College Park (Station 12) and Medic 9 was placed in service at Silesia (Station 47).
- The Fire Department Headquarters was relocated to 9201 Basil Court in Landover.
- During a snowstorm on February 23, Communications handled a record number of 1,200 calls for assistance in a 24-hour period.
- The new PGFD logo was adopted for use on all apparatus.

PGFD

Association News:

- Frank Browning ,of Riverdale Heights received a 50-year service award from County Executive Glendening.

New Equipment:

- The various volunteer companies purchased 10 new engines, one new squad and one used truck, which was rehabbed and placed in service.

1988

In January, less than 20 days after the enactment of the sprinkler legislation, a fire occurred in a sprinkler protected apartment. Two sprinkler heads activated to extinguish a chair on fire causing $2,600 in damage.

During October, Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department became the first company in the County to celebrate a 100-Year Anniversary. The Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department has been in continuous existance since they first started providing fire protection to the Hyattsville area.

The Prince George's County Fire Department continued its growth and reorganization efforts in both manpower and facilities. Chief Estepp, again, reorganized the Department to meet four major goals; To increase the minority representation in upper management, achieve greater accountablity through an improved span of control, a more equitable distribution of Volunteer Chief Officers' positions and the establishment of volunteer chief liaison positions. Included in the reorganization was the estalbihment of three volunteer division chief positions. By December 12, there were 39 new promotions, including the hiring of two majors from outside the Department after a nationwide candidate search. Members of the Department, who had worked since the start of the career system, began retiring as they reached their 20-years of service mark. This brought forth younger members of the Department to serve in the mid-level management and supervisory positions.

The Department also expanded its national and international image. In August, Chief Estepp was installed as the First Vice President of the 10,000 member International Association of Fire Chiefs (I.A.F.C.) during its annual convention in St. Louis.

Two members of the Department, Fire Captain Richard Williams and Paramedic Fire Fighter Edward Killen, were members of an eight person Emergency Management Advisory Team sent to Soviet Armenia after a large earthquake destroyed much of the area. The mission was sponsored by the I.A.F.C. and the non-profit Citizen Ambassador Program, People to People. The team spent their time in Armenia helping search for survivors in the area under less than ideal situations. After the trip, Chief Estepp began the push for development of a coordinated program for international responses in times of disasters.

New facilities were under development for two fire stations, Company 10 in Laurel and Company 18 in Glenn Dale. In addition, four existing facilities had renovations started and completed. The vacant Parklawn Elementary School in Landover Hills was renovated to provide new offices for personnel previously located in the Fire Services Building in Brentwood. The next stage of the Fire Training Academy was started, when ground was broken in May for a permanent Administration Building.

The volunteers had an improved Length of Service Program approved by the County Council on May 11,

1988. These changes were the first improvements since the original program was started in 1947. The program improvements included an increase in the basic monthly payment from $100 to $200 over a four year period, an automatic cost of living adjustment equal to that granted to the career firefighters, a payment of $4 per month for each year of certified service in excess of 25 years, burial benefits were increased from $300 to $3,000 and the maximum

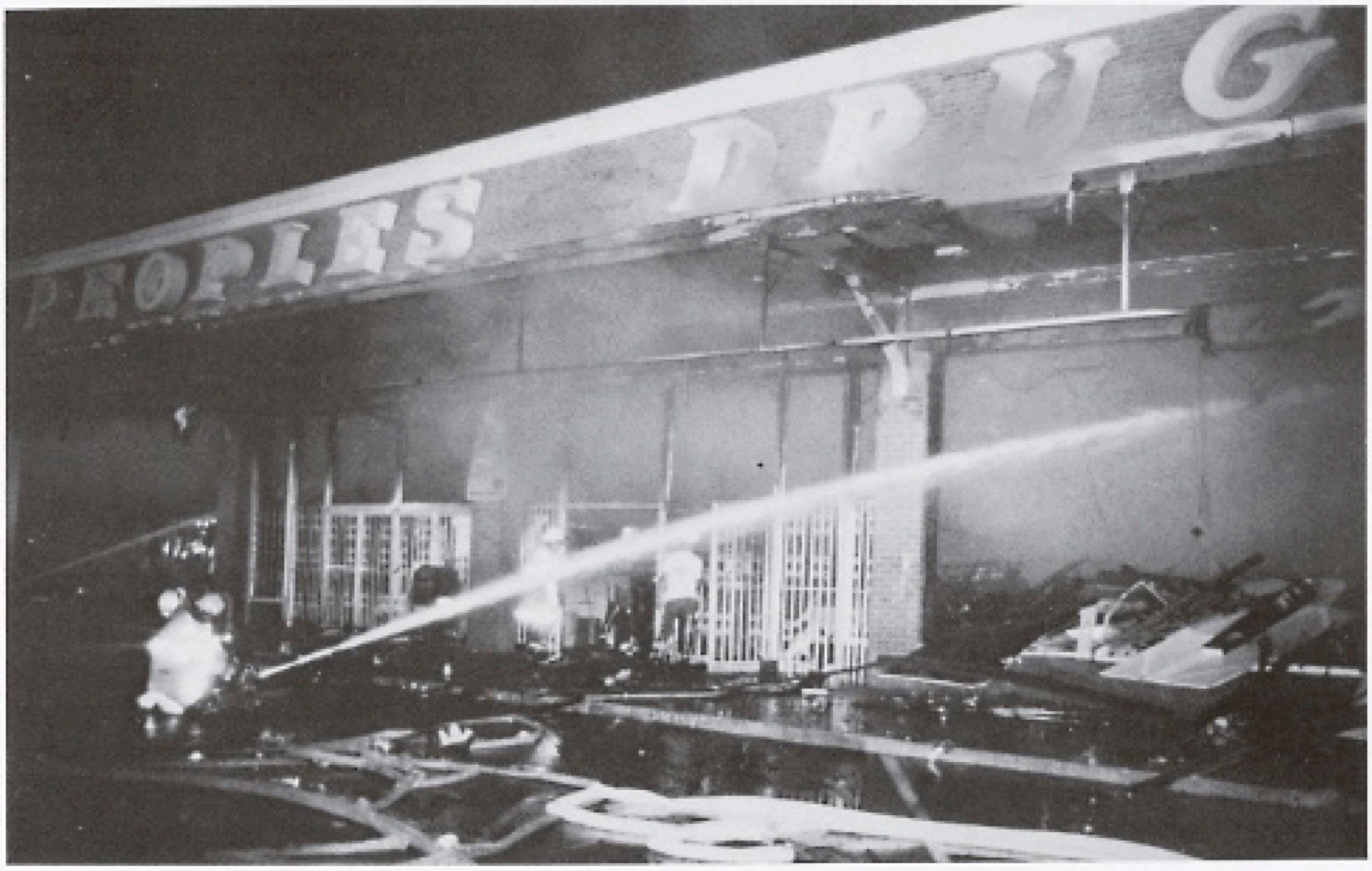
monthly payments were increased from $150 to $300.

Fire safety was, again, addressed this year with the start of a new Home Inspection Program. For the first time, members of the Department began comprehensive home fire safety checks throughout the County. Inspections were offered free to County residents who called the 864-SAFE number.

Units in the County were again confronted with a spectacular gasoline tanker fire on the Beltway on August 25. Numerous calls were received by the Communications Center reporting heavy smoke and fire conditions. First arriving units found a 8,000 gallon gasoline tanker truck on fire. Within 2 1/2 hours the fire was extinguished; however, it would take another 12 hours before traffic returned to normal on the highway. Fire units used the sound abatement barrier hydrant systems for water supply.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- The Cranford/Graves Fire Services Building in Landover Hills, was dedicated on July 8, 1988. The building was dedicated to the first volunteer and the first career firefighter to die in the line-of-duty. Volunteer Fire Captain Wesley Cranford in 1930, and Career Fire Fighter Thomas Graves, Jr., in 1980.
- Capitol Heights received career staffing around the clock in August, and resumed ambulance service. This was the fifth station to be staffed with career officers and firefighters on a 24-hour basis, the others are 6, 22, 42, and 44.
- Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Finamore retired. Major John Proels, formerly the Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief, was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and assumed the position of Deputy Fire Chief for Field Operations.
- Incidents for the year totaled 77,917. Total responses were 52,955 engines; 10,600 trucks; 8,735 rescue squads; 63,334 ambulances; 25,466 medic units, and 4,479 special units. The busiest station of the year was Silver Hill, Company 29, with 1;,081 calls, which operated two engines, ambulance, medic unit, and a breathing air unit.



Association News:

- Two volunteer firefighters died in the line-of-duty during the year. Volunteer Fire Fighter Alan P. Sondej, of Hyattsville, died on March 16, 1988, from serious burns suffered in a house fire on January 17, 1988, at 2020 Wardman Road. Volunteer Deputy Chief James G. Yvorra, of Berwyn Heights, died on January 29, 1988, when he was struck by a car on the Capitol Beltway.
- President Ronald Reagan was made an honorary member of the Allentown Road Volunteer Fire Department during "National Volunteer Week."

New Equipment:

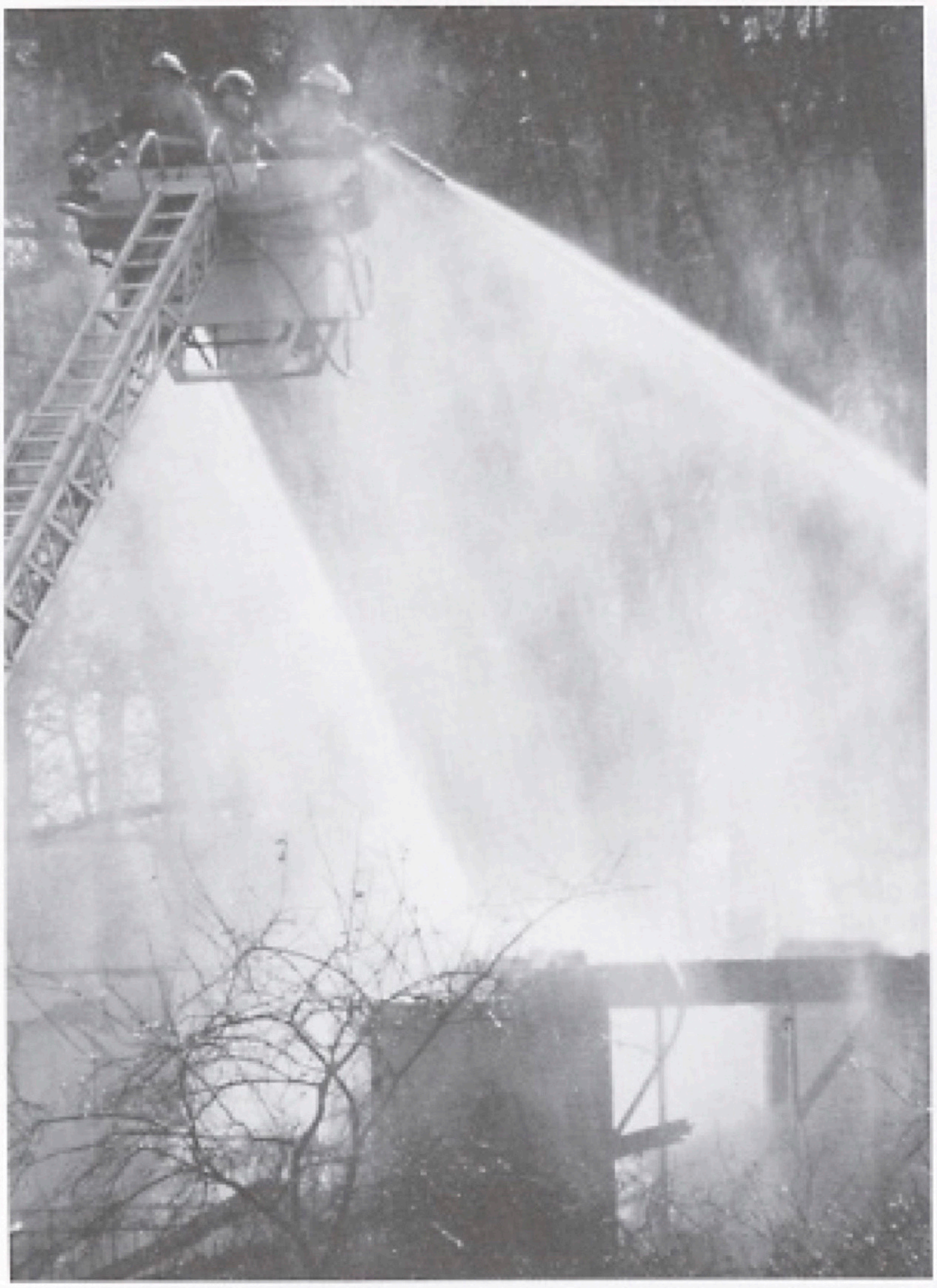
- Brentwood purchased an FMC 4-door Cab, 1,500 gpm Engine. This was their first new pumper since 1969.
- Bladensburg placed the first Telesquirt Unit in operation; Laurel purchased an American Eagle 4-door Cab, 1,250 gpm Engine; Landover Hills purchased a Seagrave 4-door Cab, 1,500 gpm

Engine; Beltsville purchased an American Eagle-Pemfab 4-door Cab 1,250 gpm Engine; and Bowie, Station 43, purchased a new Mack 4-Guys, 2,500 gallon Tanker and a Pierce Lance 4-door Cab 1,250 gpm Engine.

1989

This year would again bring great change to the constantly evolving County Fire Department. In August, Chief Estepp was elected as President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. A few months later, on November 16, 1989, County Executive Parris N. Glendening announced the appointment of Chief Estepp as the first Director of Public Safety. His new responsibilities included oversight of the Fire, Police, Corrections, and Emergency Preparedness Departments. Glendening appointed Deputy Fire Chief Steven T. Edwards as Acting Fire Chief.

A new preliminary Master Plan was released by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in November 1989. Again, like the earlier report in 1977, it made several of the recommendations for change in the County Fire Department. These included the recommended closing of



certain fire stations, relocation of others, and the possible reduction in services from some stations.

Budgets for the County Fire Department had increased from $5.4 million in 1970, to over $43 million for Fiscal 1989. There were 35 new additional positions included in the budget. In addition, phase one of a multi-million dollar plan to purchase new fire and rescue units over a five year period was started. These plans included the purchase of new pumpers, aerial ladders and platforms, heavy rescue squads, amublances, haz-mat unit and a command unit. Furthermore, County Executive Glendening set aside $300,000 for the volunteer fire companies to acquire their own apparatus through special financing and a partial grant arrangement.

The major fires of the year were: July 9, at 7100 Old Landover Road, an arson fire caused a $200,000 loss to the Montgomery Wards Warehouse. On August 2, at 3110 Hamilton Street in Hyattsville, an early morning fire destroyed the Mattress Discounters Store. Loss was $200,000 due to a faulty refrigerator motor. August 3, at 4605 Madison Street in Riverdale, a light ballast fire at the Fib-Con Corporation resulted in a $250,000 loss. August 23, saw a $375,000 loss to a garden apartment at 2104 County Road. Two weeks

later, on September 13, children playing with matches started a $405,000 fire in the apartments at 8902 Merrill Lane. The year finished out with a two-alarm fire at 13103 Larchdale Road in Laurel. A defective furnace caused a $700,000 loss and displaced several families.

Prince George's County Fire Department:

- Career Staffing: 484 firefighters, 97 paramedics, 71 civilians.
- The Engineering Division helped design and install a sprinkler system in the Shepherd's Cove homeless facility.
- 76,017 responses for the year; fire 15,089; EMS 55,543; and other 5,376.

Association News:

- Ralph N. Small, Jr., received a 50-year service award from the County Executive.

New Equipment:

- The County purchased five Seagrave 4-door Cab 1,000 gpm Engines, three Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Trucks, two American Eagle Heavy-Duty Squads, 10 Light-Duty Trucks, one Hazmat Support Unit, and an Emergency Command Unit. The engines were assigned to Riverdale, Boulevard Heights, Landover Hills, and Oxon Hill; the ladder trucks to Tuxedo-Cheverly, Oxon Hill, and Marlboro; the squads to Salesia, and Seat Pleasant.
- Again this year, the volunteers purchased new equipment. This included nine engines, one tanker, and the rehab of one truck.

New Stations:

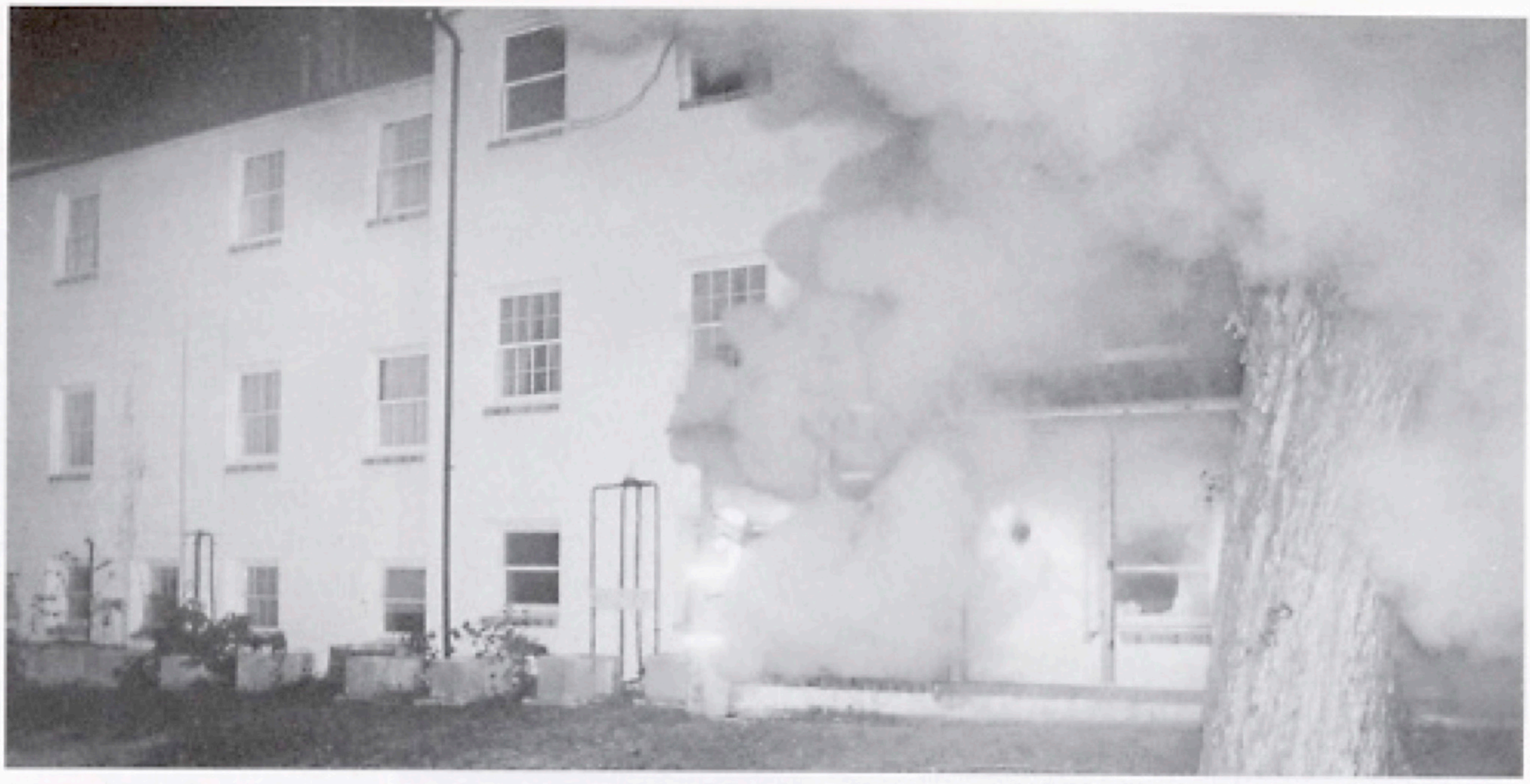
- Ground was broken for a new firehouse in Laurel. This was the first new fire station built in the County since 1980.

1990

On January 9, 1990, Acting Fire Chief Steven T. Edwards was unanimously confirmed by the Prince George's County Council as the 4th County Fire Chief to lead the Department through the next decade and beyond. Chief Estepp retired from the Department on Jaunary 31, with over 30 years of service. Beginninng as a volunteer in 1958, Estepp progressed to a Fire Board Dispatcher in 1962, and eventually to the County Fire Department where he was appointed Fire Chief, a position he held under four different County Executives. As the new year started, plans were underway for a new firehouse in Glenn Dale and Bowie, along with an addition to Station 20. Department personnel changes included the promotions of the first paramedic Sergeants and the hiring of additional fire and rescue personnel.

While work progressed for Laurel's new firehouse, the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Department broke ground for an addition to Station 20. The $465,000 project used a combination of funds from the County government, the Town of Marlboro and the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Department. The new addition will provide needed space for the new Medic Unit and apparatus bays.

A family support program, The Better 1/2's was started as an enrichment group for spouses and partners of Department employees. There goals are to help serve the community and help spouses deal with special needs associated with the fire and rescue service.



Prince George's County Fire Department:

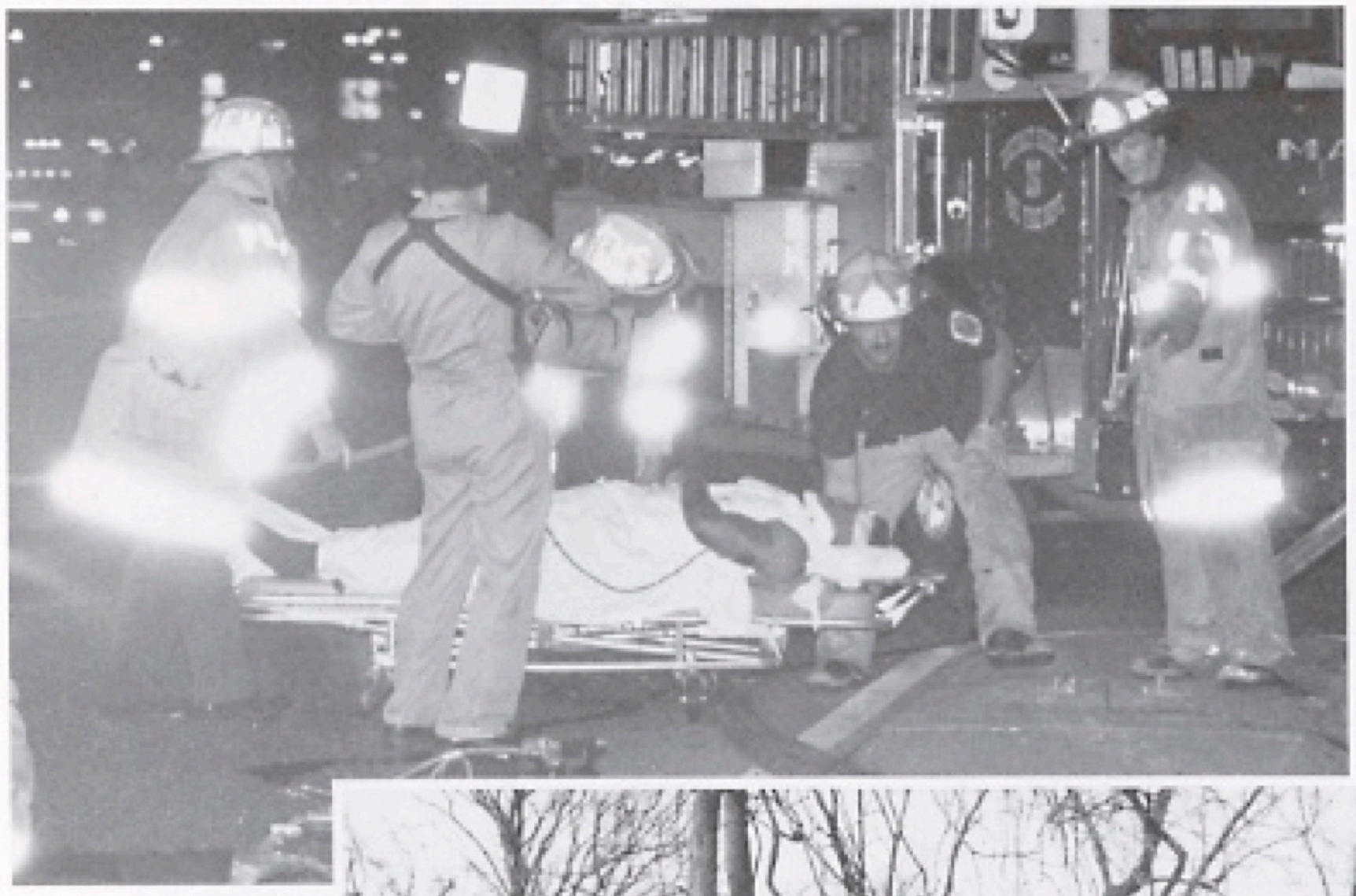
- January 5, 1990, the Department held a Formal Pass and Review for retiring Chief Estepp. On January 31, he retired with over 30 years of combined volunteer and career service.
- Medic 10 was placed in service at Marlboro, Station 20, on January 19, 1990.
- The first 15 Paramedic Sergeant positions were created and filled.
- College Park, Station 12, began operating as a HAZMAT Company after Berwyn Heights, Company 14, ceased HAZMAT operations.

New Equipment:

- The County purchased four Seagrave 4-door Cab, 1,250 gpm Engines and assigned them to Baden, Morningside, Chillum-Adelphi (Company 44) and Beltsville (Company 41).
- Seat Pleasant purchased an Emergency-One 4-door Cab, 1,500 gpm engine; Berwyn Heights purchased a Pemfab-Spartan Squad Truck; Accokeek purchased a used Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck and started the special service; and West Lanham Hills purchased the first Emergency-One 4-door Cab, 135' Aerial Ladder Truck in the County.
- ECU 1, a 1990 Thomas Built Bus was placed in service replacing a 1977 Panel Truck.

New Stations:

- Marlboro, Station 20, broke ground for a new 5,000 square foot addition on January 19, 1990 at a cost of $465,000.
- Laurel, Station 10, scheduled for completion in October, 1990.



THE FIRE CHIEFS
OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

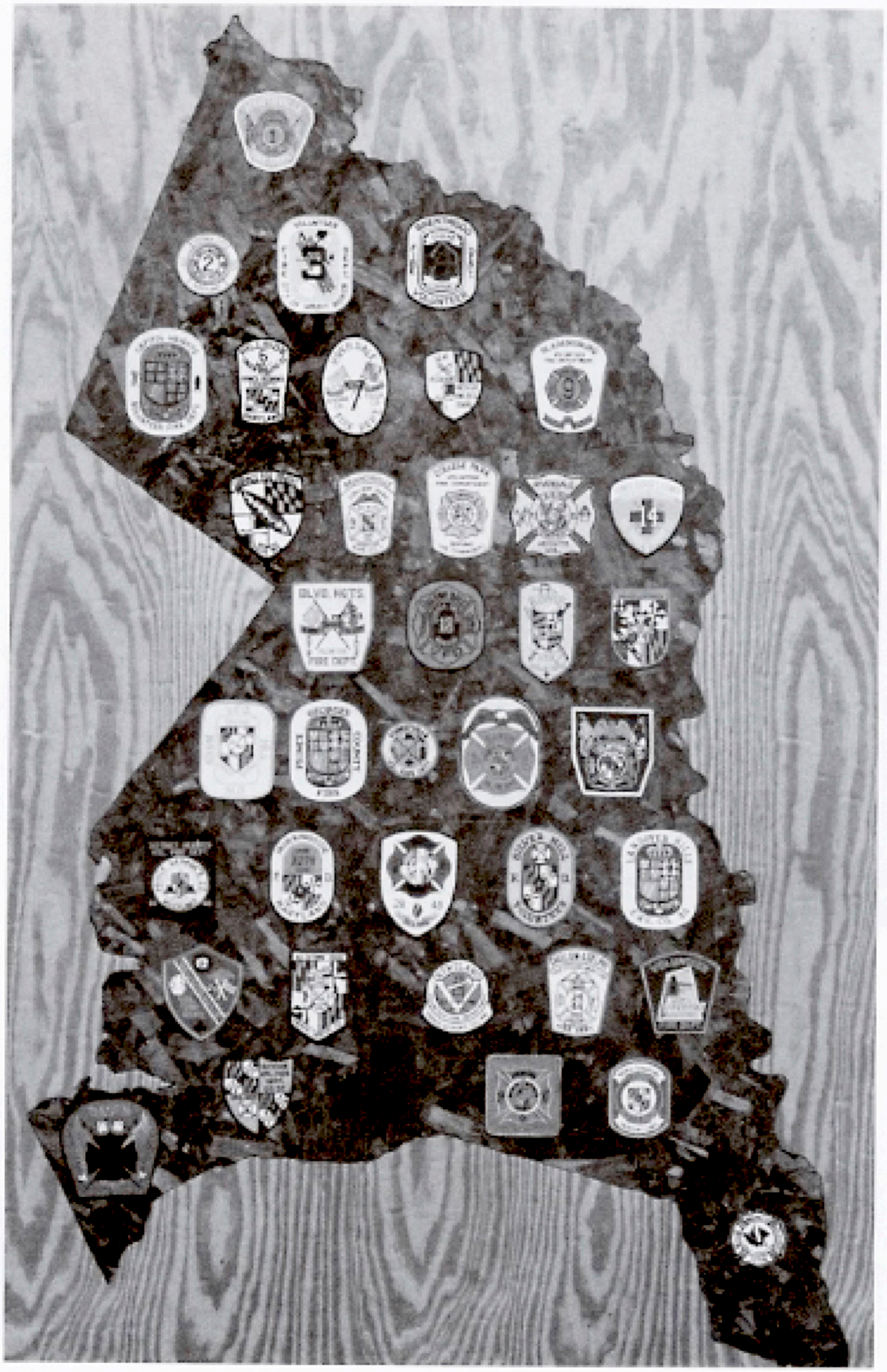
Lawrence Woltz
1971-1975

Frank Briguglio
1975-1978

M. H. (Jim) Estepp
1978-1990

Steven T. Edwards
1990-

THE STATION INSIGNIAS
OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND



The Volunteer

By Mr. William H. Anglin 1929

Hear the loud electric
Siren blow!
With its tale of terror, saying "Go!"
In the daylight
In the dark
Hear the motors purr and bark.
See the flash,
The maddening dash
Of the men through the glare,
On their way
We know not where
Not a word
Is ever heard
As they take their places here and there.
They are not afraid to speak,
But the sound of siren's shriek
With its discord
Is sweet music to their ear.
They have a desperate desire
To fight the fire!
Leaping higher.
With this resolute endeavor
To save some home now or never,
The motors roar;
And in the silence of the night
They seem to scream out their affright-
A horror they outpour.
But loving ones now left at home
Truly knows
That the danger ebbs and flows
With the blows.

And when quiet is restored
Back she goes-
Kneel by her bed of sweet repose.
Upon the bosom of the air
Is sent a solemn silent prayer
Fore those who lost,
Who did not save,
Although to them
She freely gave
Her Volunteer!

CURRENT APPARATUS STYLES
OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

4-1990 SEAGRAVE 1,250 GPM PUMPERS PICTURED IN FRONT OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING IN UPPER MARLBORO, MARYLAND

ENGINE 451, A 1986 SEAGRAVE 1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 371, A 1989 SEAGRAVE 1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 22, A 1989 SEAGRAVE 1,500 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 202, A 1989 SEAGRAVE 1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 433, A 1988 PIERCE
1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 351, A 1989 AMERICAN EAGLE
1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 62, A 1990 MAXIM 1,500 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 212, A 1989 EMERGENCY ONE
1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINES 481 & 283 TWIN 1987 HAHN
1,500 & 1,250 GPM PUMPERS

ENGINE 41, A 1988 FMC
1,500 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 321, A 1987 YOUNG
1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 363, A 1990 SEAGRAVE 1,250 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 391, A 1984 SUTPHEN
1,500 GPM PUMPER

ENGINE 381, A 1986 SEAGRAVE
1,250 GPM PUMPER

TRUCK 14, A 1986 SPARTAN
100' TILLER

TRUCK 33, A 1978 MACK, 75'
PLATFORM (REHABBED IN 1986)

TRUCK 28, A 1990 EMERGENCY ONE 135' REAR MOUNT

TRUCK 7, A 1990 MACK 100' MIDSHIP
MOUNT (REHABBED IN 1989)

TRUCK 21, A 1989 SEAGRAVE
110' REAR MOUNT

TELE-SQUIRT 9, A 1988 SEAGRAVE
500 GPM ENGINE W/ BOOM

RESCUE SQUAD 49, A 1983 GMC
RANGER

RESCUE SQUAD 47, A 1989 AMERICAN EAGLE

MINI-PUMPER 24, A 1987 FORD
250 GPM MINI-PUMPER

TANKER 36, A 1989 MACK, 4-GUYS
2,200 GALLON TANKER

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE SERVICE APPARATUS LISTING

Note: This listing is based on the approximate date of manufacture, and not necessarily the date when the unit was placed in service by the fire company. Ambulance's, chief's cars, utility, and brush units are not included.

Hyattsville: Company 1

1887, Hand-Drawn Water Barrel
1895, Howe Hand-Drawn Pumper and Chemical Engine
1897, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1902, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1903, Horse-Drawn Ladder Truck
1912, Home Built Chemical Wagon
1917, American LaFrance Chemical Engine
1922, American LaFrance 350 Engine
1922, Horse-Drawn Hose Reel
1923, Ford Model "T" Engine
1924, Nash Tractor with Aerial Ladder Truck
1924, Cadillac Light and Salvage Truck
1925, American LaFrance "Cosmopolitan" City Service Engine, 400 gpm
1928, American LaFrance "Metropolitan" Engine, 1,000 gpm
1933, Peter Pirsch Smoke Ejector
1936, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1941, American LaFrance 65' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1947, John Bean High Pressure Engine
1947, American LaFrance Engine, 500 gpm
1949, American LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1952, American LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1952, American LaFrance Squad Truck
1957, Peter Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1962, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Truck
1967, Ward LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1969, Ward LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1972, American LaFrance Tractor with
1962 American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Truck
1974, Mack "CF" Engine, 1,000 gpm
1974, Seagrave, 4-door 100' Aerial Tiller Truck
1988, Pierce Arrow 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1990, Pierce Arrow 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Cottage City: Company 2

1922, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1923, Ford Model "T" Chemical Engine
1925, Robinson Chain-Drive Engine
1926, Brockway Engine
1931, Seagrave City Service Ladder Truck
1940, Seagrave Engine, 500 gpm
1945, Seagrave 65' Aerial Ladder Truck
1948, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1953, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1955, Seagrave Squad Truck, 100 gpm
1961, Seagrave 85' Aerial Ladder Truck, 200 gpm
1967, Seagrave Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1972, Seagrave Squad Truck, 250 gpm
1978, Seagrave 100' Rearmount Aerial Ladder Truck
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,500 gpm

Mount Rainier: Company 3

——, Hand-Drawn 50-gal Chemical Tank
1913, Knox Auto-Converted to Hose Wagon
1915, Ford Model "T" Chemical Engine
1917, Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon
1926, American LaFrance Engine
1930, American LaFrance City Service Truck
1935, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1940, Peter Pirsch 65' Aerial Ladder Truck
1950, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1954, Peter Pirsch 85' Aerial Ladder Truck
1956, Peter Pirsch Engine, 750 gpm
1958, Peter Pirsch Engine, 750 gpm
1970, Maxim Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1970, Maxim Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1970, Maxim 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1986, Spartan Cab with
1970 Maxim 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1989, Seagrave, 4-door Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm

Brentwood: Company 4

—— Horse-Drawn Ladder Truck
—— Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1925, Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon
1930, American LaFrance Engine, 500 gpm
1949, International Engine
1954, American Marsh-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1960, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1960, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1964, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1969, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1988, FMC 4-door Cab Engine, 1,500 gpm

Capitol Heights: Company 5

1908, Hand-Drawn Chemical Reel
1910, Horse-Drawn Chemical Tank
1911, Horse-Drawn Steamer
1912, Ford Model "T" Chemical and Hose Wagon
1928, Studebaker Engine
1935, Ford Engine
1941, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1948, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1951, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1967, Ward LaFrance-Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1986, Ford F-700 Metro Support Unit
1986, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, FMC 4-door Cab Engine, 1,500 gpm

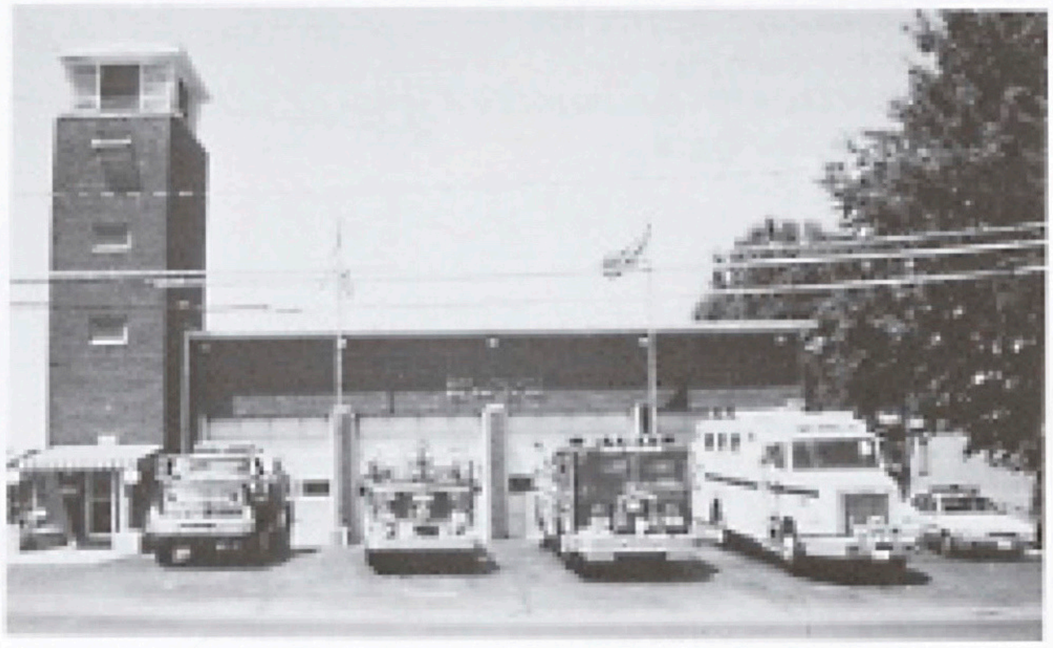
Hillside: Company 6

1925, Ford Model "T" Engine
1927, Chevrolet Engine
1929, International Engine
1941, American-LaFrance Engine, 500 gpm
1941, American-LaFrance Engine, 500 gpm
1942, Ford Engine
1950, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1952, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1954, American LaFrance 65' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1967, Hahn Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1970, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1977, Mack "CF" Engine, 1,250 gpm
1984, Spartan Cab with
1970 American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Truck
1990, Maxim 4-door Cab Engine, 1,500 gpm.
1990, Duplex 4-door Cab on
1977 Mack CF Engine, 1,250 gpm

Riverdale: Company 7

1913, Hand-Drawn Chemical Tank
1924, Ford Model "T" Chemical Engine
1927, Hose and Chemical Engine
1931, Buffalo Engine, 500 gpm
1934, Diamond Reo "T" Engine
1947, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1948, Mack Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1951, Mack Open Cab 75' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1959, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1964, Mack Engine, 1,250 gpm
1970, Mack "CF" Open Cab with Maxim 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1972, Maxim Engine, 1,250 gpm
1978, Ford-Pierce Engine, 1000 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1000 gpm
1989, Mack 4-door Cab with
1970 Mack Chassis and Maxim 100' Aerial Ladder Truck

Seat Pleasant: Company 8



1916, Ford Model T "Chemical" Engine
1926, Reo Engine
1930, Mack Light Truck, 10,000 Watt Generator
1936, Peter Pirsch Engine, 500 gpm
1948, Peter Pirsch Engine, 750 gpm
1956, GMC Squad Truck
1958, Peter Pirsch Engine, 750 gpm
1961, Peter Pirsch Engine, 750 gpm
1963, Peter Pirsch-International Engine, 500 gpm
1965, Ford Squad Truck
1970, Peter Pirsch Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1970, Peter Pirsch Open Cab Engine, 750 gpm
1976, Ford-Bruco Squad Truck
1981, GMC 4x4 Mini-Pumper, 250 gpm
1982, Ford-Emergency One Engine, 750 gpm
1989, American Eagle Squad Truck
1990, Emergency One 4-door Cab Engine, 1500 gpm

Bladensburg: Company 9

1887, Hand-Drawn Water Barrel
1922, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1923, Simplex Engine, 500 gpm
1927, Brockway Engine
1932, Ford Model "A" Engine, 300 gpm
1937, Buffalo Engine, 500 gpm
1941, Buffalo Engine, 500 gpm
1949, Mack Engine, 500 gpm
1955, Oren Engine, 1,500 gpm
1959, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1966, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1969, Mack Open Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1975, Mack 4-door Engine, 1,000 gpm
1976, Dodge Power Wagon 4x4 Mini-Pumper, 250 gpm
1979, Mack 4-door Engine, 1,000 gpm
1988, Seagrave 4-door Cab Tele-Squirt, 2,000 gpm

Laurel: Company 10

1902, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1902, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1902, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1902, Horse-Drawn Ladder and Bucket Wagon
1924, Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon
1928, American LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1932, Brockway Engine, 350 gpm
1941, Diamond Reo "T" Engine, 500 gpm
1946, John Bean High Pressure Engine, 1,000 psi
1951, Ford F-5 Breathing Air Unit
1954, American LaFrance 85' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1956, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1957, Bean-International Engine, 750 gpm
1961, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1965, American LaFrance-International Engine, 750 gpm
1968, International Breathing Air Unit
1970, Oren Engine, 1,000 gpm
1970, Oren Engine, 1,000 gpm
1975, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1983, GMC Step Van Breathing Air Unit
1985, Kenworth-Emergency One Engine, 1,250 gpm
1988, American Eagle 4-door Engine, 1,250 gpm

Branchville: Company 11

1923, Ford Model "T" Chemical Engine
1929, American LaFrance Engine 500 gpm
1937, Diamond "T" Light Wagon, 250 gpm
1937, Diamond "T" Engine, 500 gpm
1944, American LaFrance Engine, 500 gpm
1948, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1952, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1963, Ford-Barton American Engine, 1,000 gpm
1968, Peter Pirsch Open Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1970, Ford Cave-In Unit
1980, Pirsch Engine, 1,250 gpm

College Park: Company 12

——, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
——, Horse Drawn Chemical Wagon
1921, Atlas Hand Built Engine
1929, Chevrolet Hose Wagon
1933, Peter-Pirsch Engine
1942, Chevrolet-Oren Engine
1942, Dodge Foam and Brush Unit
1945, Mack Engine
1950, Mack "L" Engine, 750 gpm
1953, Mack "L" Engine, 1,000 gpm
1954, Mack "L" 85' Aerial Ladder Truck
1956, Peter-Pirsch Foam Unit Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Peter-Pirsch Engine, 1,250 gpm
1967 American LaFrance Foam Unit, 1,250 gpm
1971, Pirsch Open Cab 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1977, Mack 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Riverdale Heights: Company 13

1931, Buffalo Engine, 500 gpm
1932, Hahn Engine, 350 gpm
1935, International Engine, 350 gpm
1944, Hahn Engine, 500 gpm
1951, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1953, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1957, Ford-Marmon-Harrington Squad Truck
1959, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1962, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1972, Maxim Engine, 1,000 gpm
1972, Maxim Engine, 1,000 gpm
1987, American Eagle-Pemfab 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Berwyn Heights: Company 14

1919, Hand-Drawn Hose Reel
1919, Hand-Drawn Soda Acid Tank
1926, Republic Engine
1928, Chevy "Chemical" Engine
1932, Studebaker Engine, 500 gpm
1939, Diamond Reo "T"-Darby Engine, 500 gpm
1950, GMC Panel Van Squad Truck
1953, American Marsh-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1955, International Squad Truck
1957, American Marsh-Diamond "T" Engine, 750 gpm
1960, American Marsh-International Engine, 500 gpm
1961, GMC-Pirsch Mini-Pumper, 750 gpm
1968, GMC-Bruco Squad Truck, 250 gpm
1968, Maxim 100' Aerial Open Cab Tiller Ladder Truck
1971, Mack Mini-Pumper
1980, Mack Squad Truck
1986, Spartan Cab with
1968 Maxim 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1990, Pemfab/Ranger Squad Truck

Boulevard Heights: Company 17

1925, Ford Model "T" Chemical Engine
1928, Ford Engine (hand made)
1933, Peter-Pirsch-Diamond T Engine, 350 gpm
1942, Seagrave 65' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1945, Diamond Reo "T"-Oren Engine, 500 gpm
1952, Diamond Reo "T"-Oren Engine, 750 gpm
1959, Mack Pumpr, 750 gpm
1968, Mack Pumper, 750 gpm
1969, Ford Econoline15,000 watt Generator Unit
1971, Seagrave 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1000 gpm

Glenn Dale: Company 18

1928, Ford Engine
1929, Reo converted Engine, 90 gpm
1931, White converted Engine, 200 gpm
1931, American LaFrance-International Engine, 500 gpm
1933, Dodge Engine, 200 gpm
1939, Ford-Darly Engine
1945, Mack Engine, 500 gpm
1948, Mack Engine, 500 gpm
1951, American Marsh-Ford Engine
1959, Young-International Engine, 750 gpm
1965, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance-International Engine, 400 gpm
1969, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1970, Sutphen 85' Aerial Platform Ladder Truck, 250 gpm
1971, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1984, Spartan Cab on
1970 Sutphen 85' Aerial Platform Ladder Truck
1985, Spartan-Grumman 4-door Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1989, Spartan Cab on
1969 Ward Chassis Engine, 1,000 gpm

Bowie: Company 19

1919, American LaFrance Engine, 400 gpm
1928, Ford Chemical Engine
1928, Ford Chemical Engine
1930, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1935, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 300 gpm
1937, Diamond "T" Engine, 500 gpm
1946, Civilian Defense Trailer Pumper
1948, Brockway-Oren Engine, 500 gpm
1953, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 350 gpm
1953, Diamond Reo Engine, 250 gpm
1954, Brockway-Oren Engine, 750 gpm
1964, Brockway-Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1982, Hahn Engine, 1,000 gpm

Marlboro: Company 20

1887, Horse-Drawn Hook and Ladder Wagon (Marlboro Fire Association)
1926, Cadillac Chemical Truck, home made
1930, Seagrave Engine, 500 gpm
1939, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1945, Brockway-Oren Engine, 500 gpm
1952, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1953, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1956, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1959, Chevy-American Marsh Squad Truck
1961, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Ford-American Engine, 750 gpm
1968, Ford Squad Truck
1969, Ford Cab with
1939 American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1973, Ford-Oren Engine, 1,000 gpm
1979, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1982, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1987, Western Star-Marion Rescue Squad Truck
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Oxon Hill: Company 21

1929, Ford Model "A" Engine
1935, Ahrens Fox 85' Aerial Ladder Truck
1936, Reo Engine
1944, Buffalo Engine, 500 gpm
1951, GMC Engine, 350 gpm
1952, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1955, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1959, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1961, International Squad Truck
1962, Peter Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1965, Pirsch 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1968, International Pumper, 250 gpm
1969, Ford Providence Squad Truck
1971, Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1971, Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab, 110' Aerial Ladder Truck
1989, Emergency One Hurricane 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, Spartan Cab/Ranger Body on
1971 Pirsch Chassis Engine, 1,250 gpm

Tuxedo-Cheverly: Company 22

——, Ford Model "T" Engine
1932, Dodge Brothers Engine
1945, Diamond "T"-Oren Engine, 500 gpm
1948, American LaFrance with
1963 International 85' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1949, Mack Type 45 Engine, 500 gpm
1950, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1954, Mack Type 95 Engine, 1,000 gpm
1956, Mack Squad Truck, 500 gpm
1960, Peter Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1964, Bruco Squad Truck, 250 gpm
1965, Bruco-International Engine, 1,000 gpm
1971, Maxim Engine, 1,250 gpm
1978, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1987, GMC-American Eagle Squad Truck
1987, International Bomb Squad Truck
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab, 110' Aerial Ladder Truck
1989, Ford-Better-Roll-Up Hazmat Support Unit
1990, Thomas Bus, Emergency Command Unit

Forestville: Company 23

1933, American LaFrance Engine
1939, Darby-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1948, Oren-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1951, Ford-Marsh Engine, 600 gpm
1954, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1958, Peter Pirsch-Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1962, Ford F-950 front mount Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1970, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1975, Ford-Bruco Engine, 750 gpm
1979, Ford-Bruco Engine, 750 gpm
1980, Mack Tanker, 750 gpm
1986, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1987, Hahn 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Accokeek: Company 24

1925, Cadillac Touring Car converted to Fire Engine
1935, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 350 gpm
1944, Ward LaFrance-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1945, GMC Amphibious Duck
1946, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1949, American Marsh-International, 500 gpm
1954, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1959, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Ford-Young Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Ford-Young Engine, 750 gpm
1969, Ford-Schwab Engine, 250 gpm
1978, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1979, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1979, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1987, Ford Mini-Pumper, 250 gpm

Clinton: Company 25

1938, Oren-Brockway Engine, 500 gpm
1940, Brockway Tanker
1946, Ford Engine, 265 gpm
1951, Mack Engine, 1,250 gpm
1954, American Marsh-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1957, American Marsh-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1959, Young-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1960, Ford-Young Engine, 250 gpm
1964, Ford-Young Engine, 1,000 gpm
1968, Ford-Young Engine, 1,000 gpm
1970, Maxim Open Cab 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck, 200 gpm
1973, Maxim Open Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1976, Kenworth-Pierce Engine, 2,000 gpm
1982, GMC-Pierce Engine, 750 gpm
1986, Pierce-Lance 4-door Cab Engine, 2,000 gpm
1989, Pierce-Lance 4-door Cab Engine, 2,000 gpm
1969, Pierce-Lance 4-door Cab with
1970 Maxim 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1990, Spartan 4-door Cab on
1973 Maxim Engine 1,250 gpm

District Heights: Company 26

1923, Reo Engine
1941, Chevrolet Engine
1943, Mack Engine
1947 Mack Engine
1948, American LaFrance 75' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1953, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1954, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1962, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1967, Hahn Engine, 750 gpm
1970, Hahn 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1974, International Special Unit, 250 gpm
1977, Mack-Pierce Engine, 1,000 gpm
1984, Spartan Cab with
1970 Hahn 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1984, Spartan Cab-Hahn Engine, 750 gpm
1989, Hahn 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Morningside: Company 27

1945, Ford Squad Truck
1949, Squad Truck (ex-Telephone Company Truck)
1951, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1952, Bean-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1954, GMC Squad Truck
1958, Bean-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1962, GMC-Bruco Squad Truck
1963, GMC-Bruco Engine, 1,000 gpm
1965, GMC-Bruco Open Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1979, Freight Liner Squad Truck
1980, Three D-Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1990, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

West Lanham Hills: Company 28

1940, Buffalo Engine, 500 gpm
1945, Darby-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1951, White CO2 and Brush Truck
1954, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1957, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1959, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1960, American LaFrance Little Mo on Dodge Chassis
1960, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1961, GMC Squad Truck
1962, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1965, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1965, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1971, Hahn Engine, 750 gpm
1977, Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1982, Pierce Engine, 750 gpm
1986, Seagrave 4-door Cab 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1987, Hahn 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1990, Emergency One 4-door Cab 135' Aerial Ladder Truck

Silver Hill: Company 29

1923, Reo Engine
1939, USA Engine, 750 gpm
1946, Civilian Defense Trailer Pumper
1950, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1955, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1957, GMC Engine
1958, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1964, Pirsch-Pitman 65' Snokel Truck
1968, Seagrave Open Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1968, Seagrave Open Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1979, Pierce Engine, 1,500 gpm
1982, Chevy Step Van Breathing Air Unit
1984, Mack Engine, 1,250 gpm
1987, Spartan Cab on
1979 Pierce Chassis Engine, 1,500 gpm

Landover Hills: Company 30

——, Dodge Engine
——, Ford Engine
1942, Ward LaFrance-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1946, Civilian Defense Trailer Pumper
1950, American Marsh-International Engine, 750 gpm
1954, American Marsh-International Engine, 750 gpm
1958, American Marsh-International Engine, 750 gpm
1965, American Marsh-International Engine, 750 gpm
1969, Ford Water Supply Unit
1971, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1972, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1988, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,500 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm

Beltsville: Company 31

1946, Civilian Defense Trailer Pumper
1946, International Engine
1949, Ford Bus
1949, American LaFrance 75' Aerial Ladder Truck
1950, American Marsh-International Engine, 500 gpm
1955, American Marsh-International Engine, 750 gpm
1960, Peter Pirsch-International Engine, 750 gpm
1960, International Engine, 250 gpm
1967, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1969, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1977, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1988, American Eagle-Pemfab 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Allentown Road: Company 32

1934, Diamond Reo "T" Engine, 350 gpm
1937, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1955, American Marsh-GMC Engine, 750 gpm
1957, American Marsh-Dodge Engine, 500 gpm
1959, American LaFrance Little Mo Engine, 250 gpm
1965, Ford Hale Engine, 750 gpm
1968, Ford-Young Engine, 1,000 gpm
1971, Young Open Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1972, Maxim Engine, 1,250 gpm
1987, Duplex-Young 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Kentland: Company 33

1928, American LaFrance Engine 1,000 gpm
1931, Buffalo Engine
1941, American LaFrance-Ford Engine
1942, Ford Engine
1953, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1955, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1958, International Tractor with
1948 American LaFrance 100' Tiller Ladder Truck
1959, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1963, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1963, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1964, Seagrave 85' Aerial Platform Ladder Truck
1965, Bruce Squad Truck
1969, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1975, Dodge-Pierce Mini-Pumper, 250 gpm
1979, Mack CF/Baker 75' Aerialscope Truck
1980, Seagrave Engine, 1,250 gpm
1982, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, Ford/Marion Minipumper, 250 gpm

Chillum-Adelphi: Company 34

1937, Seagrave Engine, 500 gpm
1953, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1954, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1955, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1957, American LaFrance 85' Aerial Ladder Truck, 750 gpm
1966, American LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1968, Hahn-Thibault 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1970, Seagrave Open Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm
1970, Ford Cave-In Unit
1971, Ford Light Rescue Unit
1973, Kenworth-Maxim Engine, 1,000 gpm
1984, Spartan Cab with
1968 Thibault 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck

Greenbelt: Company 35

1935, Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1941, International Engine, 500 gpm
1957, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1959, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1969, Hahn Engine, 1,000 gpm
1977, Pierce Engine, 1,250 gpm
1979, Pierce Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, American Eagle-Pemfab 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Baden: Company 36

1935, American LaFrance-Ford Engine, 350 gpm
1939, USA Engine, 750 GPM
1940, Seagrave Engine, 500 gpm
1948, Dodge Tanker
1957, American Marsh-Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1961, Ford-Young Engine, 750 gpm
1964, Ford Tanker
1964, Ford-Young Engine, 200 gpm
1969, Ford-Young Engine, 1,000 gpm
1970, Ford Engine/Tanker, 750 gpm
1980, Jaco Pumper, 1,000 gpm
1989, Mack 4-Guys Tanker, 2,200 gallons
1990, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Ritchie: Company 37

1951, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1953, Federal Engine, 750 gpm
1959, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1961, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1987, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,500 gpm

Chapel Oaks: Company 38

1948, Mack Engine, 500 gpm
1957, FWD Engine, 1,000 gpm
1963, FWD Engine, 1,250 gpm
1970, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1986, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Bowie: Company 39

1950, Seagrave Tractor with 1940 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1954, Brockway-Oren Engine, 750 gpm
1964, Brockway-Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1973, Seagrave Engine, 1,250 gpm
1974, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1984, Sutphen Engine, 1,500 gpm
1986, Seagrave 4-door Cab 100' Aerial Ladder Truck

Brandywine: Company 40

1935, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1943, John Bean-International High Pressure Engine
1955, Seagrave Squad Truck, 100 gpm
1956, American Marsh-GMC Engine, 500 gpm
1961, American Marsh-International Engine, 750 gpm
1969, Hahn Engine, 1,000 gpm
1971, Hahn Engine, 1,250 gpm
1982, GMC Squad Truck
1987, Hahn 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1987, Hahn 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Beltsville: Company 41

1960, Pirsch-International Engine, 750 gpm
1966, International Tanker
1969, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1980, Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1987, International Bomb Squad Truck
1990, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Oxon Hill: Company 42

1950, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1953, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1955, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1962, Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1971, Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1971, Pirsch Engine, 1,000 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,000 gpm

Bowie: Company 43

1954, Oren-Brockway Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Ford Tanker, 300 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1968, Ward LaFrance Engine, 1,000 gpm
1979, Ford-Emergency One Engine, 1,000 gpm
1988, Mack 4-Guys 2,500 gallon Tanker, 750 gpm
1988, Pierce Lance 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Chillum-Adelphi: Company 44

1953, Mack Engine, 750 gpm
1960, Ford American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1964, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
1970, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1978, Mack-Pierce Engine, 1,000 gpm
1990, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Marlboro: Company 45

1956, Ford-American Engine, 500 gpm
1961, Ford-American Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Ford-Bruce Engine, 750 gpm
1978, Emergency One Engine, 1,500 gpm
1979, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1986, Seagrave 4-door Engine, 1,250 gpm
1987, Spartan Cab on
1978 Emergency One Engine, 1,500 gpm
1989, Seagrave 4-door Cab, 110' Aerial Ladder Truck

Kentland: Company 46

1963, Seagrave Engine, 750 gpm
1969, Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm
1980, Seagrave Engine, 1,250 gpm
1986, Spartan Cab on
1969 Seagrave Engine, 1,000 gpm

Allentown Road: Company 47

1964, Ford-Young Engine, 750 gpm
1966, Bruce Squad Truck
1970, Mack Engine, 1,000 gpm
1972, Maxim Engine, 1,250 gpm
1975, Ford Dump Truck Cave-In Unit
1986, Seagrave 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm
1989, American Eagle Squad Truck

West Lanham Hills: Company 48

1947, American LaFrance 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
1960, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1965, American LaFrance Engine, 750 gpm
1967, MB5 Crash Truck, 750 gpm
1971, Hahn, Engine, 750 gpm
1978, Ford Engine, 750 gpm
1987, Hahn 4-door Cab Engine, 1,250 gpm

Laurel Rescue Squad: Company 49

1940, Miller-LaSalle Ambulance
1952, Pontiac Ambulance
1952, Rescue Truck
1953, Ford Ambulance
1954, Pontiac Ambulance
1957, Cadillac Ambulance
1969, Chevy Light Rescue Truck
1972, Cushman Track All Terrain
1974, Chevy Rescue Truck
1977, Chevy Light Rescue Truck
1983, GMC Ranger-Squad

Underwater Rescue Team: Company 56

1970, Ford Utility Vehicle

Prince George's County Reserve Equipment:

Reserve Engines:

RE 1 1964, Mack Engine
RE 2 1971, Young Engine
RE 3 1971, Mack Engine
RE 4 1970, Mack Engine
RE 5 1968, American LaFrance Engine
RE 7 1968, Mack Engine
RE 8 1973, Ford/Oren Engine

Reserve Trucks:

RT 1 1963, Seagrave Cab with
1949 American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
RT 3 1974, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
RT 4 1969, Duplex 4-door Cab with
1964 American LaFrance 100' Aerial Tiller Ladder Truck
RT 5 1978, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck
RT 6 1979, Seagrave 100' Aerial Ladder Truck

Reserve Squads:

RS1 1968, Ford/Bruce Squad Truck

Disbanded Fire Departments:

Sydney Fire Department

—, Hand Drawn Chemical Tank

Greater Capitol Heights Number 2

1925, Ford Model "T" Engine
1927, Chevrolet Engine

Beltsville Agriculture Center

1942, Dodge Engine

City of Greenbelt Fire Department

1935, Ford Engine, 500 gpm
1941, International Engine, 500 gpm
1949, Studebaker Aerial Truck

Glenarden

1923, Ford Model "T" Chemical and Hose Wagon

Kent District Rescue Squad No. 2

1961, GMC Squad Truck
1967, Cadillac Ambulance
1968, Cadillac Ambulance

Photo Captions:

CHAPTER 1: P. VIII; The Original Water Barrel Engine of the Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department as photographed in 1904 at the Bladensburg Band Stand. **P. 6;** One of Hyattsville's Hose Reels in 1902, *left to right:* John McCormick, C. Matsurdaria, Mike Fleshman, A. Hasson, Bob Coward, George Wiseman, Unknown, Bill Rushe, John Fainter Jr., Short Morrison, Unknown, Chief Rushe, and the Chief's daughter. **P. 8;** 1933 photograph of Hyattsville's horse-drawn Ladder Truck, *left to right:* F. Morrison, Dike Davis, D. Cumberland, C. Matsudaria, C. Darnall, George Wiseman, H. McCormick, H. Fleshman, A. Hasson, Eli Anderson, Bob Coward, J. F. Rushe, W. Dorr and W. Rushe. **P.11;TOP,** Ruins of the Maryland Agriculture College buildings after the fire of November 29, 1912. **P. 11, BOTTOM**, Citizens of Hyattsville gather to watch the cornerstone laying ceremonies for the new Hyattsville Municipal Building on September 2, 1912. **P. 12,** Early fire in Laurel. **P. 13, TOP**, 1902 photograph of Laurel Volunteer Fire Department *with left to right front row:* Albert Frederline, Clarence White, Gus Loveren, Dave Fisher, John Fhair, Charles Young, Don Fifthian, Gus Curley, M. Divens; *rear row:* Charles Federline, W. Fiythe, John Newman, Fred Flester, Mr. Thawley and Albin Fairall. **P. 10, MIDDLE,** Laurel Volunteer Fire Company Number 1 around 1902 with *left to right:* James McDonald, Frank Penn, Joseph A. Myer, Chief David Fisher, Samuel Leisure, James Federline, Walter Brown, Clive Leisure, Elmer Sullivan, the Mascot, Charles Lowe, Morris Leisure and Arthur Harrison. **P. 10, BOTTOM,** Laurel Volunteer Fire Company Number 2 *with left to right:* Charles Federline, William Thies, Leonard Stockman, Unknown, Thomas Brashcars, Marion Baldwin, Frank Thies, Owen Selby, William Thies Jr., the Mascot, Unknown, Merrill Fisher, James Federline and Harry Phelps, Edward Vogts and Fire Chief David Fisher are seated. **P. 14,** Early photograph shows Charles Really and Ed Sacers. **P. 15, TOP,** Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department around 1911 with Chemical Tank. *Seated left to right are:* George Adams, Jack Brooks, Unknown, Unknown, Mr. Pierce, Harry Adams, standing: Unknown, Unknown, Dutch Thiel, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Brugger, Unknown, Ed Brugger, Unknown and Unknown. **P. 15, BOTTOM,** First motorized fire engine in the County was this Ford Model "T" which belonged to the Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department. **P. 16,** Early 1920's group photograph of Capitol Heights with the Ford Model "T" and the former horse-drawn Steamer. **P. 16, BOTTOM,** A July 4, 1913 photograph of the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department. **P. 17,** 1920 photograph of Mount Rainier *with left to right:* 1917 Ford Model "T" Hose Wagon, 1926 American LaFrance Engine and 1915 Ford Model "T" Chief's Car. *With units are left to right:* Joe McMan, Billy Donohoe, Charlie Alexander, Unknown, Arthur Bates, Clarence Moore, John Kline, Ed Chase, Unknown, Joe Plummer, Bernie Beal, Harvey Wilson, Chief Young, Reggie Austin and George Lee. **P. 17, MIDDLE,** 1922 photo of Mount Rainier with left to right: John Kline, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Herberger, Unknown, Chick Young, Bill Freeman, Frank Crown, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Ted Richards, Unknown, Unknown, Harvey Wilson, Unknown, Unknown. **P. 17, BOTTOM,** The small frame shed on the right housed the old Chemical Tank from 1920 to 1923. **P. 18,** Dedication of Station 8 on Rosevelt Avenue in 1916. *Pictured left to right:* John Cayne, Unknown, Alvin Turner, Unknown, Van Reuth, George Palmer, *seated,* Ed Fisher, Bill Bowman, Bob Kraft, behind engine, Mr. Cooper and Leo Taylor, *on running board,* Mr. Houchen and Peter Butler. **P. 20**, Group shot in front of the old Firemen's Hall in Brentwood around 1922.

CHAPTER 2: P. 22, TOP, 1923 photograph of Hyattsville taken prior to the 1st Annual Convention. *Seated left to right are:* Noble Rushe and R. A. King, *standing*, Charles Wiseman, John Fainter, Jr., H. A. Harrison, John Dorr, Bill Tobin, Toots Garrison, Stewart Canvin, Wallace Dixon, Unknown, Ray Stevens, W. Harrison, S. J. Kelly, Harry Degges, William Harrison and R. J. King. **P. 22, TOP LEFT**, Cover of 1st Annual Convention Program. **P. 22, TOP RIGHT,** Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department with John Bright *(left)* and Mr. Beatty *(right)* on the bumper of the 1923 Simplex. **P. 22, BOTTOM,** Members of the Cottage City Volunteer Fire Department with the 1923 Ford Model "T" Chemical Engine are *left to right:* Frank M. Frazier, William H. DeWaters, Martin DeWaters, Nel. P. Rasmussen, Unknown, Samuel Z. Tayman, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Vincent A. Simmel and T. Weston Scott, Sr. **P. 24,** Photo of Brentwood Volunteer Fire Department's first Firehouse. **P. 25, TOP**, Group photograph of the Sydney Volunteer Fire Department with their hand-drawn Chemical Tank. **P. 25, MIDDLE**, Riverdale Volunteer Fire Department's first Fire Chief, poses with his crew of volunteers. **P. 26, TOP,** Berwyn Heights' first reliable fire engine at a Labor Day parade in Baltimore, Maryland n 1929. *Pictured with unit are left to right:* Ed Weaver, Charles Loveless, James Taylor, and the rest are Unknown. **P. 26, BOTTOM,** The crew from Station 14 on December 30, 1930. *Left to right:* Ed Weaver, Robert Ailes, Walter Anderson, John Yost, Samuel Moyer, Mort Johnston, Harry Anderson, James Taylor, Henry Myres, and John Klewer. **P. 28**, An early crew in Bladensburg with the 1923 Simplex. **P. 29, TOP**, College Park Volunteer Fire Department's 1921 Atlas, the companies first, converted from an old Atlas Pie Truck and a used horse-drawn chemical wagon. *Left to right:* Eben Jenkins, Franklin Lepson, Lawrence Hodgins, Kenneth Gettings, Harry Burton, Thomas Lepson and Frank McVey. **P. 29, BOTTOM**, College Park's second engine was this 1929 Chevrolet combination Hose Wagon and Booster Unit. Chief Henry McDonnel is shown with the hose and Roger Headley is the driver. Unit was painted orange and black in 1933 to match the University of Maryland's colors. **P. 31, TOP,** Hyattsville's 1926 Cadillac Hose Wagon and American LaFrance Engine *with left to right:* B. Harrison, Dearstine, B. E. McCann, John Fainter, Jr., J. L. Sullivan, A. Degges, G. Wilcoxen, W. B. Harrison, N. Rushe, seated in rear, T. Latmer, W. Richards, R. Johnson, C. Johnson, H., Wilcoxen. **P. 31, BOTTOM,** Brentwood's first firehouse at Upshur and 37th Street in the rear of Mr. Sipes house prior to 1926. *Left to right:* Moxley, James Sampson, Easter Day and other Unknown. **P. 32, TOP,** Members of Greater Capitol Heights Number 2 in the early 1900s. **P. 32, BOTTOM**, Early engine of the Greater Capitol Heights Volunteer Fire Department. **P. 33**, 1928 Studebaker with *left to right:* Walter Stommel, Unknown, Markwood, Fudge, Love, Walter Oliver, Unknown, Ed Brooks, Unknown and Red Smith. **P. 34, TOP,** An early crew of Rescue Squad 1 in Bladensburg. **P. 34**, Units of the Rescue Squad Association at Bladensburg. **P. 35**, 1928 view of Firehouse *with left to right:* W. A. Duvall, William Stauffer and Dick Jewel. **P. 36**, Panoramic views of Hyattsville's equipment in the early 1930's. **P. 37**, The pride of Hyattsville was the 1928 American LaFrance Engine. **P. 38**, 1935 Ford on its day of delivery to the Bowie Volunteer Fire Department in 1935. **P. 40**, 1932 Photograph of Glenn Dale's 1931 White Engine. **P. 41**, Old Branchville Firehouse *with left to right: kneeling,* Roy Longnecker, Len Willie, Allen Thrift, Jr., William Deeck, Wilton Hardy, *standing,* Bernard Kinand, Allen Thrift, Sr., Allen Baker, Leonard Excel, Cleveland Johnson, Edward Feighenne, Ross White, Dick Jewel and Harty Wilson. **P. 42**, The first Oxon Hill Firehouse with the 1936 Reo *(left)* and the 1929 Ford *(right)*. **P. 45, TOP,** Tuxedo-Cheverly Volunteer Fire Department's 1930 Ford Model "T" *(left)* and 1932 Dodge Brothers Engine *(right)* in the early 1930's. **P. 45, BOTTOM**, 1932 Dodge Brothers Engine.

P. 46, Members of Mount Rainier in 1930 included: 1-Lebowitz, 2-Donohue, 3-Kieners, 4-Laning, 5-Crown, 6- Councilman James, 7- Clerk Gager, 8-Councilman Pruitt, 9-Mayor Beall, 10-Councilman Worley, 11-C. Moore, 12- Chief Young, 13-Deputy Chief Bates, 14-Captain Freeman, 15-Mezzanotti, 16- G. Beal, 17- C. Xander, 18-Casey, 19-Deatley, 20-Flynn, 21-Wilson, 22-Birch, 23-Beckert, 24-Unknown, 25-Cissell, 26-Chase, 27-Kline and 28-Unknown. **P. 48**, Cottage City's Truck 2 parades. **P. 49,** Accokeek's 1930 Cadillac Touring Car which the members converted into an engine. **P. 50, TOP**, Officers of the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department in 1933. **P. 50, BOTTOM**, Hyattsville's Cadillac was converted into a Light and Salvage Wagon in the early 1930's by the members. *Left to right:* George Wilcoxen, Ernest Davis, Earle Dorrelle and Noble Rushe. **P. 51,** Hyattsville's 1933 Pirsch Smoke Ejector which was purchased for $8,200. **P. 52,** 1933 Peter Pirsch Engine. **P. 53**, Fire at 122-124 Maryland Avenue on February 4, 1934. **P. 55**, Riverdale's Boat 7. **P. 57**, Units from Clinton on parade through Capitol Heights. The 1946 Brockway Tanker is on the left. **P. 58**, Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department Equipment after taking over from the Federal Government. *Left to right:* 1941 International, 1949 Studebaker, and 1935 Ford. **P. 60,** Branchville's 1939 LaSalle Ambulance with left to right: Richard Hughes, Rodney Leser and Francis Springman. **P. 61**, Members of the Edmonston Volunteer Fire Department in front of their Firehouse. **P. 63**, Members of Edmonston constructed this unit for their Civil Defense Trailer. **P. 65**, District Heights 1923 Reo with and unknown crew. **P. 67**, The first Squad of the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department. **P. 68,** 1931 USA Engine on December 14, 1947. H. A. Duke is driver and Earl Wood is on running board. **P. 69**, 1946 photograph of Landover Hills *with left to right:* Danny Roach, Clarence Taylor, Charlie Burton, Bill Leadford, Bill Fox and Ben Campus. **P. 71**, An early crew from Chapel Oaks *included left to right:* Lt. Rodney, F/F Bordon, F/F Lyoror, Chief Gachman, Fire Marshal Brights and Sgt. Tabron. **P. 72**, Members of Company 31 in the 1950's. **P. 73**, Riverdale's Mack Engine was featured on the October 1948 Stamp. **P. 74, TOP,** 1945 Diamond "T"-Oren Engine with Driver Eddie DeBeithezy, Officer Pop Suit, and left backstep, Hocke McCombs. **P. 74, BOTTOM**, Fire at Watkins Lumber Yard in the late 1940's. **P. 75, TOP**, Photo of Station 23 in the 1940s *with the left to right:* 1948 Oren-Ford, Ambulance, 1939 Ford-Darby and 1933 American LaFrance Engine. **P. 75, MIDDLE TOP**, Cottage City's equipment in the late 1940's *included left to right:* 1945 Seagrave 65' Aerial, 1940 Seagrave Engine and 1948 Seagrave Engine. **P. 75, BOTTOM LEFT**, Seat Pleasant's old Firehouse. Pictured with 1948 Pirsch *are left to right:* Norman Jones, Bernie Loyd, Robert Moran, Billy Roberts, Frank Pusey, Jake Mendor, Unknown and Charlie Welch. **P. 75, BOTTOM,** Mr. Seitz *left* and Mr. Hutchinson with the 1944 Buffalo and the 1936 Reo. **P. 76, TOP AND MIDDLE,** Units operate at the Town Hall fire in March 1941. **P. 76, BOTTOM,** A three-alarm fire at the Beltsville Agriculture Center on September 25, 1949 caused $120,000 in damages. 19 pieces of equipment from 9 County Departments battled the blaze. **P. 77,** Women members of the Laurel Rescue Squad clean their unit. *Left to right are* Lita Nixon, Mary London Donaldson and Joan Donovan - the future Mrs. Joseph Robison. (Photo Copyright the Washington Post, Reprinted by permission of the D.C. Public Library). **p. 78,** Allentown Road's 1934 Diamond Reo "T" and first Chief's Car in front of the station. **P. 79, TOP**, Company 32 on parade July 14, 1951 in Tuxedo-Cheverly. **P. 79, MIDDLE**, Accident at Route 1 and University Boulevard in the early 1950s. **P. 79, BOTTOM,** 1951 White CO2 and Brush Unit in front of Station 28. **P. 80,** Members of Kentland at their old station. **P. 81, TOP,** Station 34 around 1952 with the 1937 Seagrave Engine and 1937 Cadillac Ambulance. **P. 81, BOTTOM,** Fire at Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1952.

P. 82, Entire County Rescue Squad in 1952 on the grounds of the University of Maryland. **P. 83, TOP**, Hyattsville 1952 American LaFrance Squad Truck. **P. 83, BOTTOM,** Fire at Dupont Hardware in 1953. **P. 84,** Volunteer Convention parade with Morningside's 1954 GMC-Bean Engine and 1954 GMC Squad Truck. **P. 86**, Station 36. **P. 87**, Brandywine's 1935 Seagrave with Officer Melvin Ellis, Driver Ernie Schfler, Back step Jimmy Carrol *left* and John Carrol *right*. **P. 88, TOP**, Dedication of Station 44 on November 16, 1963. **P. 88, TOP RIGHT**, Hillside. **P. 88, MIDDLE,** members of Hyattsville with the new Firehouse are *left to right:* R. Pennel, J. F. Selzer, C. DiVincenzo, P. W. Stout and L. A. Watson, Sr. **P. 88, BOTTOM LEFT,** Units in front of Station 33 *are left to right:* 1961 Ambulance, Utility, 1959 Seagrave, 1955 Seagrave and 1953 Seagrave. **P. 88, BOTTOM,** Station 30 in the late 1950's. **P. 89,** Fire in the late 1950's destroyed this house at 5800 Queens Chapel Road. **P. 90,** Plane Crash on August 7, 1958. **P. 92**, Laurel Rescue Squad outing in the 1960s. **P. 93**, Fire at Bowie Race Course on February 2, 1961 destroyed much of the track, (Photo Copyright the Washington Post, Reprinted by permission of the D.C. Public Library). **P. 94**, Old Fire Prevention car on the scene of a 1960's fire. **P. 95**, Crew of the Ritchie Volunteer Fire Department *included left to right: kneeling,* Herb Gordon, Carl Necker, Gilbert Perowitz, Tony Clemens, Melvin Mason, Alan Young, *standing,* Nek Vertz, Joe Ball, Bill Ridgeway, Hoharse Cadell, Gene Bean, Buddy Ricketts, Alton Nicholson, Ronny Nicholson and Paul Ducket. **P. 96**, Fire at the Ford Lumber Company on December 23, 1965. (Photo Copyright the Washington Post, Reprinted by permission of the D.C. Public Library). **P. 97**, Fire Board in Hyattsville. **P. 99**, During the riots of 1968, Engine 32 was transferred to DC Engine 26 on April 5, 1968. They responded to the Sears Outdoor Shop at K and Oates Streets NW. Driver is Frank Colea, Unknown DC Firefighter pulling hose, Bob Mutchler, Skip Lauver , Barry Miller and Mike Clemens. **P. 100, TOP**, Department of Fire Protection Review and Ceremony on November 16, 1968. p. **100, BOTTOM,** Early Career Recuit School formation. **P. 101,** Groundbreaking for Station 30 at its new location of 68th and Annapolis Road. **P. 102,** Volunteer Deputy Chief George Tauber of Silver Hill, responds on a call. **P.103, TOP LEFT,** Station 28, **P.103, TOP RIGHT,** Station 36, **P.103, MIDDLE LEFT,** Station 25, **P.103, MIDDLE RIGHT**, Station 29, **P.103, BOTTOM,** Station 23.

CHAPTER 3: P. 104, TOP, 1974 Gasoline tanker fire at St. Barnabas Road and the Beltway, **P. 104, MIDDLE,** Career Recruit Clas. **P. 104, BOTTOM,** Early Career Recruit School Class at the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute Fire Training Academy. **P. 105**, Chief Lawrence Woltz with members of the career and volunteer force on March 26, 1971. **P. 106,** Members of the first Volunteer Fire Commission being sworn in. **P. 107,** Early fire training class at MFRI. **P. 108**, Chief Woltz signs a mutual aid agreement with Andrews Air Force Base. **P. 109,** The first OCS Class with *left to right, back row:* Hall, Davenport, Poole, Colea, DeBethizy, Unknown, *middle row:* Unknown, Atkinson, Beall, Grega, Weckesser, Elmore, Huthcinson, *front row:* Ridgeway, Unknown, Cardello, Chroniger, Baldwin, Mayhew, Patterson. **P. 112,** House fire on December 17, 1975 caused $60,000 damage to a house in Kettering. **P. 113, TOP AND MIDDLE,** 1974 Gasoline tanker fire at St. Barnabas Road and the Beltway. **P. 114,** Commercial building fire at 4801 Beach Place on June 2, 1976. **P. 115,** House on Wheels presentation on May 19, 1976. **P. 116,** Volunteer members receive 50-year service awards *left to right:* Roy Haller, Frank Dealing, William Freedman, Joe Plummer, County Executive Kelly, T. Weston Scott, Unknown, Chief Briguglio. **P. 118, TOP,** Mid 1930's photo of the first three Rescue Squads (Ambulances) in the County. **P. 118, BOTTOM** Medics prepare a patient for helicopter transport. **P. 119, TOP,** Paramedics exam new equipment at the Medic 10 Dedication.

P. 119, BOTTOM, Paramedics administer drugs to a patient. **P. 120, TOP,** Apartment fire on February 28, 1977 at 6241 64th Avenue in Riverdale Heights, **P. 120, MIDDLE,** January 13, 1977 fire at Belair Auto Body. **P. 120, BOTTOM RIGHT,** Fire on April 20, 1977 at 7855 Riverdale Road. **P. 120, BOTTOM LEFT,** Suitland Film Vault fire in Silver Hill. **P. 121,** Chief Estepp with County Executive after appointment ceremonies. **P. 122, TOP,** 1979 apparatus include Truck 22, Engine 62 and a reserve Medic Unit, **P. 122, BOTTOM,** House fire on May 14, 1979. **P. 123,** Aftermath of the gas explosion in April which killed Career Fire Fighter Thomas Graves. **P. 125,** September 1980 Marlboro Race Track fire. **P. 126, TOP,** Gasoline Tanker fire in 1981 on the Beltway at Greenbelt Road. **P. 126, BOTTOM,** Medic 4 being placed in service at Bowie Station 43. **P. 127,** New burn building at the Fire Training Academy. **P. 128,** Two minority members of the Fire Department at work. **P. 129, TOP,** Squad 40, 1982 GMC, **P. 129, MIDDLE LEFT,** Engine 482, 1977 Ford 750 gpm Engine, **P. 129, MIDDLE RIGHT,** Ambulance 149, 1980 Ford, **P. 129, BOTTOM,** Engine 352, 1976 Pierce 1,250 gpm Engine. **P. 130,** STU member fighting a fire. **P. 131, TOP,** Members of the HAZMAT Team during handling leaking drums. **P. 131 BOTTOM,** Chief Estepp show a visiting dignitary the Bomb Squad Robot. **P. 133, TOP,** Members of the LEVEL III HAZMAT Team prepare to handle an incident. **P. 133, BOTTOM,** Fire at Freeway Airport in 1984 destroyed a hanger. **P. 134,** Dedication of Medic 5 at Clinton Station 25. **P. 135, TOP,** Propane tanker burns on the side of the Beltway. **P. 135, BOTTOM,** Fire at 5708 Ager Road on September 15, 1985. **P. 136,** Two-Alarm fire at the University of Maryland's South Administration Building. **P. 137, TOP,** Two-alarm fire on January 8, 1986 in Chillum. **P. 137, BOTTOM,** House fire in Camp Springs. **P. 138, TOP,** Fire on February 19, 1987 in Edmonston. **P. 138, BOTTOM,** Ground-breaking ceremony for new addition to Station 39 in Bowie. **P. 139,** Fire at Supreme Lighting in Laurel. **P. 140,** Garden Apartment fire on January 2, 1987. **P. 141, TOP,** Firefighters look on during a two-alarm fire on Ronald Road. **P. 141, BOTTOM,** Members of Company 22 and 33 help Rescue get off an ice patch. **P. 142,** Fire in December at an Auto Body Repair Shop on Zug Road in Bowie. **P. 143, TOP,** House fire on Narrows Lane in Bowie, **P. 143, MIDDLE LEFT,** Firefighters from Company 22 advance a hoseline into a house fire. **P. 143, MIDDLE RIGHT,** Firefighter and rescue personnel work to extricate a trapped victim. **P. 143, BOTTOM LEFT,** A member of the HAZMAT Team watches a overturn truck on the Interstate. **P. 143, BOTTOM RIGHT,** Units from Bowie operate on a fire at Zug Road. **P. 144, TOP,** Investigators sift through the remains of an apartment fire. **P. 144, MIDDLE,** Firefighters working. **P. 144, BOTTOM,** Foam Unit 48 on the scene of a gasoline tanker fire on the Beltway near Route 450 in August 1988. **P. 145,** Firefighters battle the People's Drug Store fire. **P. 146, TOP** Rooming House fire in Seat Pleasant. **P. 146, BOTTOM,** PGFD Members at the St. Louis IAFC Conference. **P. 147,** Truck 18 operates during a two-alarm fire on Larchdale Road in Laurel. **P. 147, BOTTOM,** Truck 28 on the scene of a two-alarm garden apartment fire on Brightseat Road. **P. 148, TOP,** Units operate on a Rooming House fire in Riverdale. **P. 148, MIDDLE,** Ralph N. Small, Jr., with retiring Chief Estepp. **P. 148, BOTTOM,** The Bomb Squad Commander briefs the Command Post Officials about what they have found. **P. 149, TOP,** Chief Steven T. Edwards is sworn in as Fire Chief. **P. 149, BOTTOM,** Firefighters operate at a warehouse fire 4905 Buchanan Street in Edmonston. **P. 150, TOP,** Units operate at a Real Estate Company fire in Clinton. **P. 150 MIDDLE,** Opening of Medic 10 at Station 20 in Upper Marlboro. **P. 150, BOTTOM,** Artists' rendition of new Station 10. **P. 151,** Fire and Rescue workers rush an injured person to a helicopter. **P. 150, MIDDLE,** Ground is broken for a new addition to Station 20. **P. 150, BOTTOM,** Members of the Ladies Auxiliary on parade.

Footnotes

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